



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Wet and blustery

(B4Sp) 40

THE TABLOID: 8 PAGES OF FILMS

JUDI DENCH AND
BILLY CONNOLLY
BEHAVE ROYALLY

FOREIGN NEWS PAGE 12

POLLLUTION
THE GOOD NEWS
AND THE BAD

IN THE TABLOID

EDUCATION
PARENT POWER
IN ACTION

The mood is turning anti-Royal

Mourners voice anger
at family's reserve

Michael Street, Anthony Bevins and Clare Garner

National mourning for Diana, Princess of Wales, began turning to dismay yesterday at the Royal Family's apparent failure to join in public displays of grief.

The dismay - and in some cases anger - indicated a growing gulf between the mood of the general public and its tributes to Diana across the country and a Royal Family remaining closed from view at their Balmoral redoubt.

Some experts sympathetic to the monarchy even feared a public desire for a scapegoat over the tragedy could weaken the institution irreversibly. The

funeral, at the same time as comforting the two boys. They share our grief very much and we should respect that."

But then, as if to illustrate the gulf that exists between the family and the public, and providing a lesson of how things should be done, Mr Blair walked to the end of Downing Street to talk to people mourning the Princess.

Some of the attacks on the Royals have been over the decision to issue a "business-as-usual" message by taking Princes William and Harry to church at Balmoral on Sunday morning, a few hours after Prince Charles had broken the news to them of their mother's death. There was also concern that, in keeping with tradition, there was no flag at half-mast over Buckingham Palace. The flag only flies when the Queen is in residence.

The fear for the family was that these immediate concerns, combined with reawakened anger over the way it allegedly mistreated Diana, could prove a potent cocktail of discontent. The mood was particularly strong among people interviewed by the *Independent* as they queued - some for up to 11 hours - to sign the books of condolence at St James's Palace.

Sandra Seeg, a lecturer, said:

"I don't think the Royal family is aware of emotions the British people have. They treated Diana very badly. They should have been here for these days. I hope they don't treat anybody else like this at all." Ellen Byrne, who works for the Sue Ryder Foundation, said: "I thought the Queen might have gone on the television and said how sorry she was. Everyone would have loved it. Just to hear her say that." A woman who declined to be named said: "Why does she have to hide behind the gates of Balmoral? My God, if I died I hope my mother-in-law would say something, even if she wasn't that fond of me. Diana was such a public person that we expect them to show their grief."

Susan Connolly, a housewife from Pembury, near Tunbridge Wells, agreed. "This happened on Sunday. It's now Wednesday. I think it would have been nice for some members of the Royal Family to make a statement. That's been a bit slow in coming perhaps."

Joey Daley-Land, an anthropologist, from Chelsea, said: "How come all of England, all of Britain, all of the world, knew something the Royal Family did not know? I don't think they've ever understood where Diana is coming from and what she meant to so many people."

Another woman said: "I heard somewhere that Charles had spent 30 days with the boys last year. He needs to get off his backside and stop employing people with silly names."

Attempts were made yesterday to involve more members

*They share
our grief
very much.
We should
respect
that,*

Tony Blair

Diana 1961-1997

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potential seriousness of the situation was illustrated by a defence by Downing Street last night of the family's actions. It pointedly made public the fact that Mr Blair had a 15-minute "private" phone conversation with the Prince of Wales in which the Prime Minister pledged his full support. His office said the press could not expect the Royal Family to jump in and be extras in a media event."

Mr Blair emphasised his support for the Royal Family.

"They are trying to make all the practical arrangements, which

are very complex, obviously, for

the public in Saturday's day of grieving when the Palace said the funeral procession to Westminster Abbey will be doubled in length and two large television screens erected in Hyde Park. A statement by the Palace saying Prince Charles will fly to London with Princes William and Harry tomorrow evening to view Diana's coffin in the

Chapel Royal at St James's Palace added that the family, in particular the princes, were "taking strength from the overwhelming support of the public, who are sharing their tremendous sense of loss and grief".

A constitutional expert, David Starkey, a supporter of Prince Charles, said there was

a growing gap between the public and the family. "For the first time it is probably the end of the Royal Family - for good or bad." Prince Charles was in an impossible situation but the family was showing "emotional constipation," Mr Starkey said. Penny Junor, a royal biographer and another supporter, said it was not their way to

show public emotion but added: "It is a bit surprising that the Queen has not made expression of sorrow. There is no callousness in it. It's just an inability to know what the hell they should do." A Palace spokesman pointed to an statement and said grieving was a "private process" and people should be allowed to do it their own way.

Bolero: the work of a man going mad

Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor

Maurice Ravel's *Bolero*, one of the most popular pieces of classical music ever written, displays signs that it was composed by a diseased mind, according to a psychiatrist.

The throbbing rhythm of the orchestral piece, which achieved saturation exposure after it was selected by the Olympic skaters Torvill and Dean as part of their competitive programme, is an example of "musical persever-

ation", indicating that Ravel was in the early stages of dementia. Persistence is the endless repetition of a word or sound or action in response to a stimulus and is characteristic of sufferers from Alzheimer's disease and other degenerative conditions of the brain. In the case of *Bolero*, the same musical phrase is repeated 18 times without variation or evolution.

Writing in the *Psychiatric Bulletin*, Dr Eva Cybulski, a psychiatrist in Dartford, Kent, says: "The most striking feature of

Bolero is the throbbing rhythm of obsessive almost hallucinatory insistence, a sort of 'danse macabre'." Ravel, who was born in 1875, showed the first signs of the neurological problems that were to blight his last decade in 1927, the year before he composed *Bolero*. He became disorientated during a performance of his music and also began to make blunders while writing music.

He recovered and completed a successful tour of the United States in 1928 but four years later his dementia worsened after a car accident. He could not speak, read or write and lost control of his movements. Although his memory, judgement and aesthetic sense were preserved, his ability to express himself was progressively impeded: a mind trapped in an unresponsive body.

Dr Cybulski said yesterday that she had been drawn to investigate Ravel's background after being puzzled by the effect *Bolero* had on her.

"It is a very haunting, attractive and sensual piece of

music but it is also irritating. I can't listen to it too often. I wondered why I found it irritating and when my niece, who is a musicologist, looked at the score she found exactly the same phrase is repeated 18 times. That is not typical of classical music. Normally there is an evolution of the theme."

There was no questioning Ravel's genius but every creative work reflected the personality of its author, Dr Cybulski said.

"This is what a genius can do when afflicted."

QUICKLY

Bounty hunt killing
The killings in Arizona of a couple by a posse of bounty hunters has thrown the spotlight on an arm of the American justice system redundant of the Wild West. Page 13

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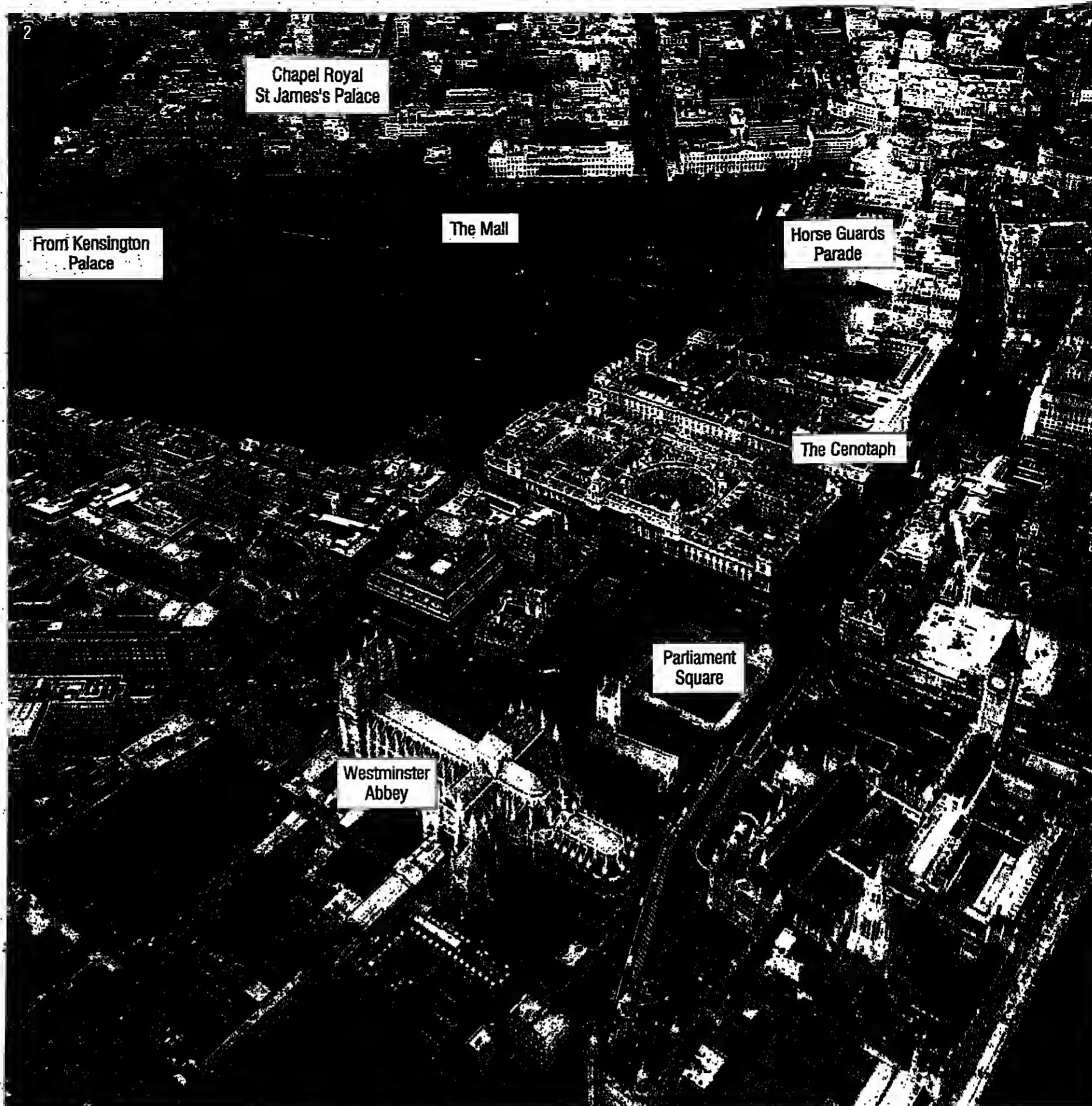
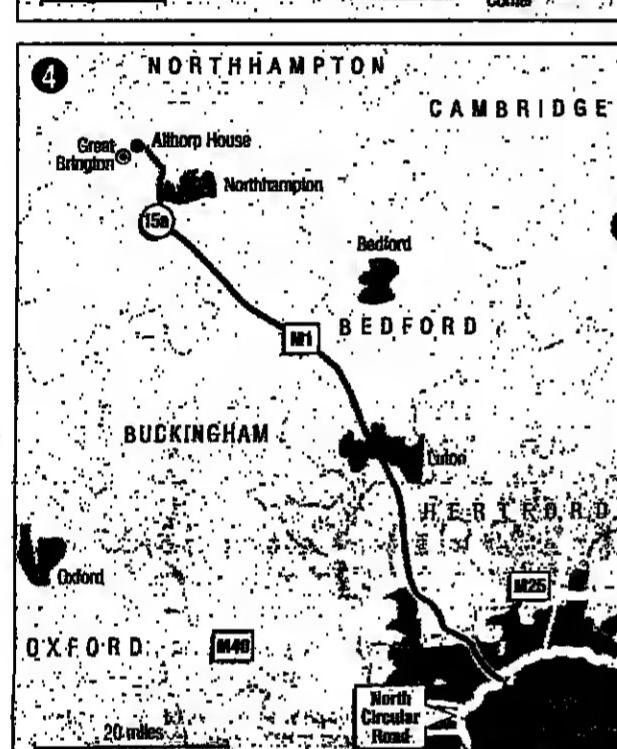
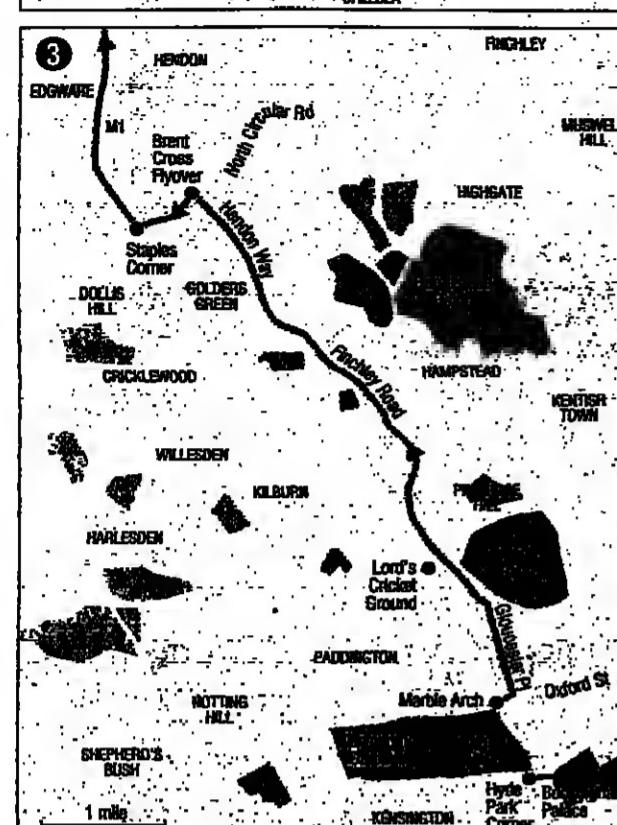
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Palace doubles length of funeral procession route

Michael Streeter

For the second day running, Buckingham Palace yielded to the public clamour to say farewell to Diana, Princess of Wales by dramatically extending the length of her funeral procession.

Just 24 hours after ruling out any lengthening—but agreeing to “narrow”—the procession to give more people access—officials said that her body would be taken to Kensington Palace from St James’s Palace tomorrow evening before the cortège started its journey on Saturday.

This will more than double the length of the route to accommodate estimates of up to 2 million people converging on central London on Saturday. Transport officials are meeting today to make arrangements to cope with what are expected to be the biggest crowds ever to converge on the capital.

The coffin will leave Kensington Palace at around 10am, carried on a gun carriage by riders of the King’s Troop and escorted by mounted police. It will join the rest of the procession at The Mall as originally planned at 10.25am.

The new route passes down Palace Avenue, on to Kensington High Street and Queen’s Gate, past the Albert Memorial and along Carriage Road in Hyde Park. It will then pass Apsley House and under Wellington Arch to Constitution Hill and The Mall.

A Palace spokesman said they had not bowed to pressure. “We’ve always tried to consider a way of lengthening the route in such a way that more people would be able to see the procession in safety,” he said. He said that using Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park was a “safe and secure” way of ensuring that.

Earlier the palace announced that two giant television screens would be mounted in Hyde

Park—awakening memories of past events there attended by the Princess—to allow more than 100,000 people to get a view of the proceedings. The service will also be transmitted to the crowds outside Westminster Abbey by loudspeaker.

After the service and one-minute silence, the Princess of Wales’ coffin will be driven at stately pace through central London, through the north of the city and along the M1 to

North Place. It will turn towards Lord’s cricket ground, along Park Road to Wellington Road, then north along Finchley Road.

From Hendon Way the cortège will pass over the Brent Cross flyover and take the North Circular Road to Staples Corner to the start of the M1 at junction 1. It will go up the motorway at around 40mph and leave it at junction 15A near Wootton in Northamptonshire. On the motorway it will be followed by a

Police car, then a motorcade of

Northamptonshire police urged people to stay away from the village and from the Althorp estate to give Diana’s family the privacy they have asked for.

He said after the cortège leaves the motorway it will drive along the A43 at 10mph, then around the outskirts of Northampton before going through Harlestone and on to the main gates of Althorp House, where it will leave public view.

Police have been in consulta-

tion with the local parish council and 250 passes allowing villagers access to Great Brington will be issued, along with maps informing the general public of the sealed-off area.

Motoring groups urged drivers not to break motorway rules trying to catch a glimpse of Diana’s funeral procession.

Extra trains will be laid on to bring people in to London, and traffic organizations yesterday urged mourners to leave their cars at home and use public transport. Richard Freeman,

spokesman for the Automobile Association, said: “Don’t even think about bringing cars into the capital. To my knowledge, they are not laying on access to extra parking or lifting parking restrictions. There could never be enough parking available for the amount of visitors expected. We’re advising people to park outside; use public transport and leave plenty of time.”

But there is concern that the

capital’s infrastructure will be unable to cope with the scale of visitors. A London transport spokeswoman warned: “There

will be massive congestion on the Underground. We would advise people to walk from Waterloo

to wherever they are going to watch the procession from.”

Yesterday, speaking at a press

conference in Great Brington,

where the Princess’s coffin will

be laid to rest in the Spencer family

mausoleum in the church of St Mary the Virgin, Assistant

Chief Constable Frank Whiteley,

Marble Arch, Oxford Street, and Portman Street to Gloucester



St Mary the Virgin at Great Brington. Photograph: Reuters

“We’ve tried to lengthen the route so more people could watch in safety”

Buckingham Palace spokesman

Northamptonshire. The route taken by the hearse, followed by members of the Royal Family and the Spencer family, will be from the Abbey to Constitution Hill, as it came from St James’s Palace.

It will continue to Apsley Way and Wellington Arch, Hyde Park Corner, Park Lane, Cumberland Gates, Tyburn Way, Marble Arch, Oxford Street, and Portman Street to Gloucester

“rolling road block”, which traffic will be allowed to follow.

The 77-mile route will give hundreds of thousands—possibly millions—of people a chance to see the cortège.

Yesterday, speaking at a press conference in Great Brington,

where the Princess’s coffin will

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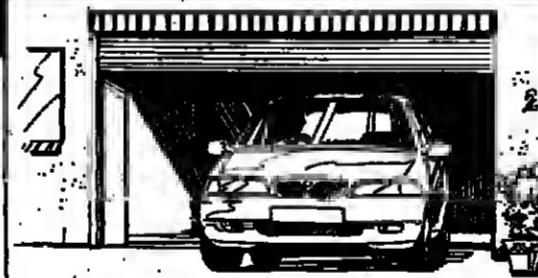
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the aftermath

Diana 1961-1997

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Charles and Camilla forced apart



The Prince of Wales: May be booed and hissed at funeral

Kathy Marks

Prince Charles once spoke of the "soul refreshing" quality of the hills and pine forests around Balmoral Castle. It is to be hoped that he has found some solace this week in the rugged Highland scenery of the Royal estate.

Tomorrow, he must emerge from the seclusion of Balmoral and guide his sons through the ordeal of Diana's funeral. It will be the most difficult day of their lives, and possibly of his too. For so strong is national sentiment towards his ex-wife that it must be possible that the Prince will be booed or hissed by the crowds lining the route of the procession.

As he steels himself for the funeral, Prince Charles must be reflecting on the cruellest hand yet dealt him by fate. Diana's new relationship with Dodi Fayed had snatched his chances of softening public attitudes towards Camilla Parker-Bowles, the woman he has loved for more than two decades.

Now everything has changed. Prince Charles's priority, now and for many years to come, must be William and Harry. As their only parent, he will need to devote more time to them and fill the void left by their mother's death.

As he tries to console the boys in these early days, one can only speculate on his own

confused emotions. A huge sense of loss, no doubt, for friends say that despite the bitter circumstances in which he parted from Diana, a strong

Amid his anguish, the Prince is deprived of the company of Camilla, the woman on whom he relies for emotional support. He has spoken to her by

being together have been virtually dashed.

The campaign waged by the couple's friends to rehabilitate Camilla as an acceptable companion, even future wife, for Prince Charles has been abandoned. A party next week in aid of the National Osteoporosis Society, of which she is patron and at which he was to be guest of honour, has been cancelled. So has a holiday that they planned to take together in Scotland later this month.

"Diana's death has set Charles and Camilla back years," said Judy Wade, Royal correspondent for *Hello!* magazine. "It is the worst thing that could possibly have happened

to them. Their situation is absolutely hopeless.

"If Camilla's car is seen near Highgrove in the next six months, it could be the end of them. The public simply won't tolerate it."

The Prince will need to muster all his resources for Saturday. Dr David Starkie, a constitutional expert, detects a growing mood of hostility towards him. "There is such a national head of steam building up at the moment that anything could happen at the funeral," he said.

"I'm not sure that the Royal Family know what they are letting themselves in for. I feel desperately sorry for Prince Charles."



Camilla Parker-Bowles: Charles could have to sideline her

Diana's death has set them back years

Judy Wade, Hello! magazine

bond endured from their 15-year marriage. But a loss tinged with ambivalence, possibly with anger, certainly with the guilt that he could have helped prevent her premature passing,

telephone many times from Balmoral, according to friends. But given the near-saintification of Diana, it is inconceivable that they can meet in the near future, and their longer-term hopes of

Profits bloom as flowers carpet footpaths

Amanda Kelly

Never before has such a thick carpet of heart-shaped floral tributes drowned the entrance to any royal palace and never before has business been quite so good for their suppliers.

Florists across the capital have watched their profits soar as thousands of people choose to express their grief for Diana, Princess of Wales, with a simple bunch of flowers.

Shops, stallholders and supermarkets around Buckingham Palace, St James's Palace and Kensington Palace are rushing in extra supplies to meet the demand and companies like Interflora and Teleflora have seen a significant rise in the number of telephone orders.

The Flowers and Plants Association, which represents the industry, predicts that, by the end of the week, Diana's death will have provoked the largest number of floral tributes ever recorded. They believe demand may even exceed that of Mother's Day when orders soar by £50 million.

Spokeswoman Andrea Caldecourt said: "The rush has been going on since Sunday when people began wanting to lay floral tributes. People coming to London at the weekend may well want to bring more flowers with them or to lay them at various sites around the country."

"We don't expect to run out though. A lot of functions in London which would usually have numerous floral displays have been cancelled and there are a lot of flowers available seasonally at the moment."

Connie Chandler, area manager of the Flowers at Waterloo company which has branches at all London's major railway stations, said: "We have been very busy, especially at Charing Cross and Victoria, with lots of people getting off trains and buying flowers before going to pay their respects."

"We are doing particularly well at the lower end of the market with bunches of roses and carnations. A lot of children are coming to our stalls with their parents and they each want their own bunch of flowers to lay."

"We haven't considered raising our prices, though, because we are busy enough not to have



Say it with flowers: A stallholder at Covent Garden market in central London carrying in new supplies of flowers to meet the huge demand

Photograph: John Voss

Guestlist reflects a world of glamour and celebrities

Michael Streeter

As is life, so in death: Diana's funeral congregation will include a large cross-section of the famous and glamourous with whom the Princess spent much of her adult life.

The guest list, though containing a scattering of politicians and foreign dignitaries, will reflect the Princess's own life, and will be based as much on the views of the Spencer family and her own private office as those of the Palace.

Among the celebrities from the world of pop music, her friend Elton John will be attending the Westminster Abbey service, where it is thought he will sing.

Other pop stars expected are George Michael and Sting, together with his wife Trudi Styler. From a different generation, the Welsh-born singer Shirley Bassey is likely to attend.

Although Saturday's ceremony will not rival designer Gianni Versace's service for sheer volume of fashion glitterati – an event attended by Diana herself – leading figures from that world will be represented. These may include the models Cindy Crawford and Iman, wife of David Bowie.

Other celebrities likely to be asked will include the businessman Richard Branson, Anna Harvey, the deputy editor of *Vogue* magazine, the actor John Travolta, the dancer Wayne Sleep, and the photographer Mario Testino, who took portraits of the Princess for *Vanity Fair*.



whom she shared a holiday in Greece two weeks ago.

It was unclear last night whether former close male friends such as Will Carling, the one-time England rugby captain, will be invited.

Among charity friends will be the Rev Tony Lloyd of The Leprosy Mission, Mike Whitlam, of the British Red Cross and Derek Bodeli, of the National AIDS Trust.

The Palace has not sent out the usual endless invitations to ambassadors in black suits, and there has been a deliberate attempt to avoid a dignitary-driven ceremony. However, there will be representatives from other countries, including Hillary Clinton, and the French President Jacques Chirac's wife Bernadette.

The form of the 45 minute service is still not finalised, though it is believed that Verdi's *Requiem*, one of Diana's favourite pieces of classical music, will be played.

The organising committee's challenge is to plan a dignified and traditional service which also fits the modern image of the "People's Princess".

Dr William Beaver, the Church of England's head of communications, stressed: "It is a religious occasion and it is a sensitive occasion, but we want it to be one in which everyone can share."

One of the princess's show-business friends, the singer Luciano Pavarotti, has said he was asked to sing – but was too grief-stricken to accept.

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The lakes of death bred by rain and sun

Nicholas Schoon

MILLIONS OF gallons of black and stinking floodwater have caused a farming and ecological disaster on one of Britain's most important and unusual wetlands.

Thousands of fish – bream, pike, roach and others – have been killed by the stagnant, deoxygenated water which has covered hundreds of acres of the Somerset Levels for the past month. Rich cattle pastures have been wiped out.

The Government's Environment Agency is using large quantities of hydrogen peroxide, a volatile, corrosive chemical, to raise oxygen levels in the floodwater, so that it can be pumped off the fields and into a river without killing more fish.

Exactly a month ago, heavy downpours flooded more than one thousand acres of land. When the rain stopped and the

sun shone, the temperature climbed and bacteria began to rot the lush grass and cattle dung lying below the surface.

The microbes consumed most of the oxygen dissolved in the water within a few days. The decomposition turned the water black, produced a foul stench and killed the abundant fish, snails and water insects living in the network of ditches and dikes which drain the levels.

First the Environment Agency tried pumping the water into nearby rivers, which just killed more fish. Then they bubbled fresh oxygen through the water, which was simply too large a task – there are 50 million gallons of water after all.

The last hope was hydrogen peroxide. This corrosive chemical, more normally used as hair bleach, adds free oxygen to water. More than sixty tons of the chemical will have been mixed in



After the flood: The Somerset levels near Curry Rivel where 50 million gallons of rainwater have lain rotting for a month, creating poisonous lakes and killing fish. Scientists have added hydrogen peroxide to re-oxygenate the water

Photograph: Marc Hill

by the time the task is finished, probably this weekend. Pumping the then fish-friendly water can then begin in earnest.

The levels around Glastonbury and Bridgwater are mostly

Government-designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest. These flat pastures are a haven for more than 10,000 ducks and wading birds in winter and spring. There

is a rich variety of plants and

smaller animals living on the pastures and in the ditches, although parts of the levels are used for intensive cattle farming.

The National Farmers Union said some 50 farmers were

affected. "The more productive grazing and silage fields will have to be ploughed up," said regional director Anthony Gibson. "The

floodwater was like a randy

soup, stinking to high heaven."

The water which has already receded has left behind brown, dead, vegetation. "The moor looks very sick, sad and sorry," said John Leete, for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Herons have been flocking in to eat all the dead fish. "There are worries about the vegetation and the fish, but I think the birds are going to be fine," said Mr Leete.

Greens expose illegal trade in CFCs

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A bogus CFC trading company set up by green campaigners in London has highlighted widespread smuggling of the banned, ozone-destroying chemicals worldwide.

The deception by the Environmental Investigation Agency shows there are several firms willing to use false documentation and subterfuge to flout trade measures aimed at phasing out CFCs, which consume the Earth's protective ozone shield.

The fake firm approached three Chinese companies, one of which, Ningbo Sino-Resource Import Export of Zhejiang, explained that it could alter virgin, mass-produced CFCs made in China to appear as recycled product – which can still be traded within the European Union.

"Frankly speaking, we are supplying F12 [CFC 12] overseas," said a fax from the Chinese company's president, Joe Koman, to the bogus firm, Trans-Cool Trading. "However, some clients ask us to reduce purity and make F12 like to be [sic] recycled for the sake of import licence. The above is our secret between you and me. Please do not leak it out."

The production of CFCs, used mainly to refrigeration and air conditioning, has been banned in the developed world for more than a year under the Montreal Protocol, a treaty aimed at restoring the ozone layer. Users are being urged to swap to more expensive but ozone-friendly chemicals.

Countries such as China and India have until 2010 to phase out CFCs under this treaty, but they are banned from exporting to the developed world.

Governments envisaged that the market price of CFCs would

soar as remaining supplies were consumed and more and more users were compelled to switch to the substitutes. Instead prices remained suspiciously low.

There is mounting evidence that there are Chinese producers willing to export, and middle-men in the West seeking big profits in smuggling in the cheap CFCs. This summer the director of a small German company was charged with smuggling more than 600 tonnes of CFCs from China.

Some firms advertise cheap CFCs on the Internet. The Environmental Investigation Agency set up its dummy firm in order to approach several companies inside Europe and beyond which it suspected were involved in flouting the ban.

In the past few weeks it has received a flurry of faxes, telephone calls and e-mails. Some asked the right question about whether the firm possessed the necessary licences covering the special cases where CFCs can be exported.

Others supplied a price – usually way below the market price for the residue of stockpiled or recycled CFCs still being traded within the EU. One Chinese company promised false recycled certificates.

The bogus firm also entered into negotiations with two Spanish firms which says the agency are setting out to flout the ban on CFC trading. It also believes a firm based in Birmingham has played a major part in exporting large quantities of CFCs from Russia to the US.

The agency is calling for a ban on any sales of CFCs within the EU, and closure of the exemptions and loopholes. Next week government delegates from more than 100 nations meet in Montreal to negotiate further tightening of the international controls on ozone-destroying chemicals.

DAILY POEM

An Upbraiding

By Thomas Hardy

Now I am dead you sing to me
The songs we used to know,
But while I lived you had no wish
Or care for doing so.

Now I am dead you come to me
In the moonlight, comfortless;
Ah, what would I have given alive
To win such tenderness!

When you are dead, and stand to me
Not differented, as now;
But like again, will you be cold
As when we lived, or how?

"An Upbraiding" first appeared in the collection *Moments of Vision*, in November 1917. It appears in the Oxford World's Classics edition of Hardy's *Selected Poetry*, edited by Samuel Hynes (OUP, £3.99).

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news

Abbey develops a bad habit with £1 charge for counter service

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

"I've never heard of anything so cheeky in all my life," fumed Keith Sinclair, a communications quality manager, and most of his fellow Abbey National customers agreed with him.

Yesterday the bank started charging some customers for queuing up inside branches rather than using its cash machines and telephone banking service. Abbey National's Instant Plus account-holders will now have to pay £1 for basic over-the-counter transactions. Instant Plus, launched last year, is a card-based account and customers are meant to use cash machines or the 24-hour telephone banking service. But some people have been queuing inside branches along with everyone else.

"This new initiative is

intended to help reduce queues in branches and free counters for customers with more complex queries," said a spokesman. "A number of Abbey National's competitors have been levying similar charges for some time."

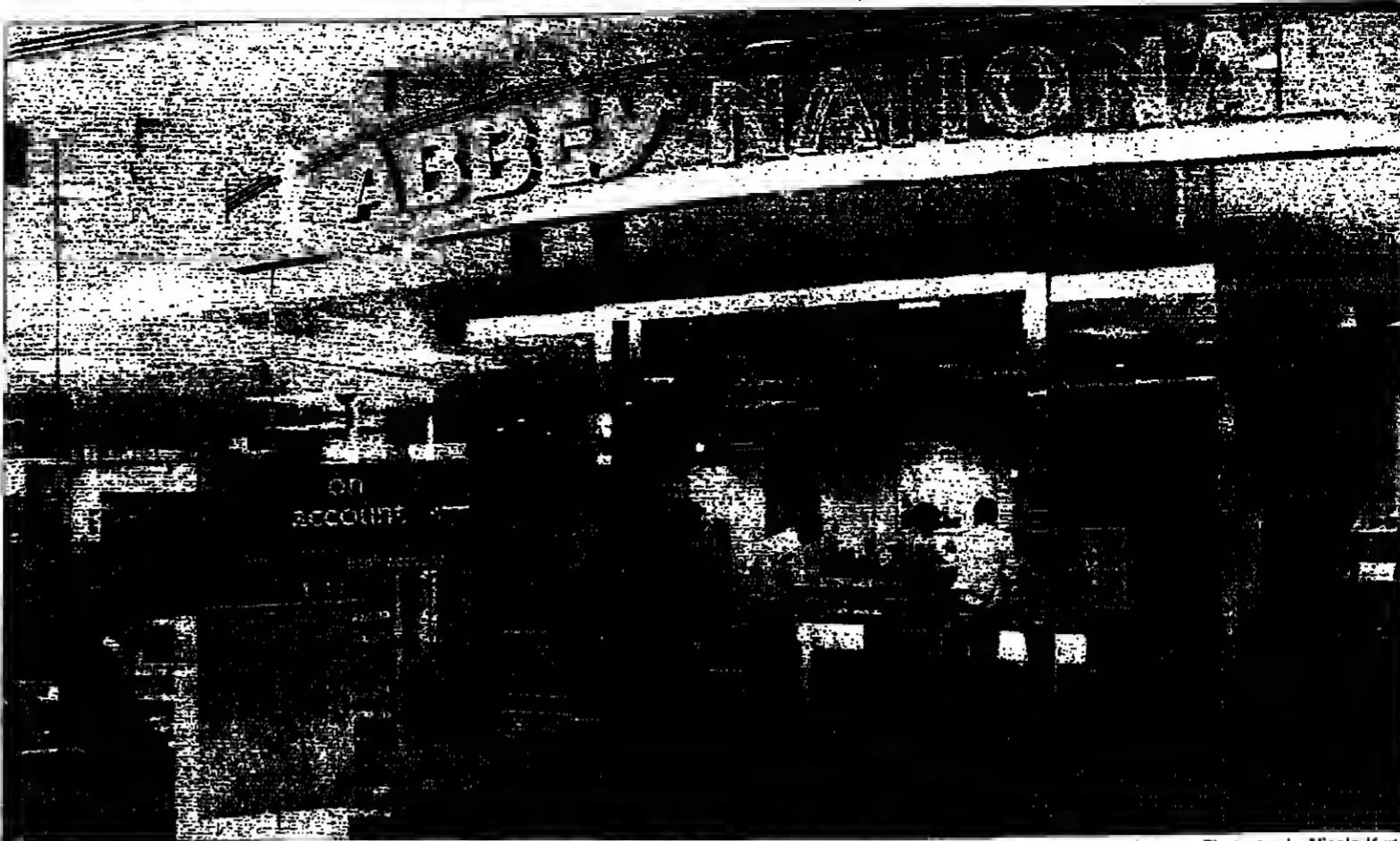
But Gary Bradshaw, a merchant banker, said: "They are just moving with the times, and hopefully they'll pass on the savings to the customers when they are able to reduce staff numbers."

Simon Smith, an accountant, said: "It's the first I've heard of it. I don't like using machines at all and try to avoid it when I can."

Deborah Hyde said: "People will end up changing to another building society or bank. They will do that if they have to pay."

None of the main high street banks said that they plans to introduce such charges. Britannia Building Society charges £1 for counter withdrawal if the balance is less than £100, as does the Coventry Building Society. The Alliance and Leicester charges 60p for counter withdrawals when more than two are made in a month or the balance is less than £1,000.

It's a consequence of the building societies going public," said Keith Sinclair. "It's the thin end of the wedge. This'll go on and on."



Brought to account: Customers are furious that the Abbey National has begun charging those who do not use cash machines. Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

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Some cartons of Ready to Pour Gravy 375ml from Bisto with these "Best Before End" dates have been contaminated in production and could potentially pose a risk to health.

Consequently Bisto has recalled from shops all varieties of Ready to Pour Gravy 375ml with these dates as a precautionary measure.

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August 1998
September 1998
(the date appears on the top of the carton).
All other Bisto products are unaffected.

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300 trains cut from flagship route

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

One of the first privatised commuter train companies will cut more than 350 services from its winter timetable after failing to attract passengers on a flagship inner London route.

Connex South Central, a French-owned train company, is to axe 58 trains every weekday from its much-heralded south London Metro service as well as 12 every day on two other routes.

The company said that it had only managed to increase passenger numbers by 12 per cent since the Metro service started in January. It has also failed to negotiate a new pay deal with the drivers' union Aslef - which has meant costs were higher than expected and has led the company randomly to cancel many trains at short notice.

Connex will escape penalties over the cuts because they do not affect the minimum service levels to which the company committed itself when it took over running the trains last year.

Passenger groups reacted furiously to the news. Save Our Railways, the anti-privatisation lobby, pointed out that the company received more than £3.5m a week in subsidy from the Government, adding that it was unacceptable that Connex South Central was "raking in public money while slashing services".

The London Region Passengers Committee (LRPC) said it was "amazed and profoundly disappointed" by the cuts, but Connex said it would be running more trains than last winter and was exceeding service requirements on all its routes.

Sir Alan Greengross, chair-

man of LRPC, said: "One begins to wonder whether the critics of railway privatisation were right to suggest that we, the passengers, would be faced with cuts as soon as the financial going got tough."

More ominously was the response from the passenger franchising director's office, which awarded Connex the contract to run trains. A spokesman said that John O'Brien, the franchising director, was "clearly disappointed that cuts are being made and hoped these services could be restored in the future".

A Connex spokesman argued that there were often changes between summer and winter timetables. However, railway observers noted that on commuter train lines there was no difference in the types of traveller that used the service between seasons.

The south London services have been reduced partly through lack of demand and partly to improve reliability elsewhere," the company spokesman added.

The cuts also scupper plans for a turn-up-and-go metro system for south London, which is not served well by the capital's sprawling Tube network.

Liberal Democrat Paul Burstow, MP for Sutton and Cheam, pledged to do everything possible to ensure Connex backed down over "unjustified" cuts. "The cuts may be legally permissible but they certainly make no sense in attempting to encourage more people back onto the railways," he said.

"It's simply scandalous that despite receiving millions of pounds each week in government subsidy such cuts are even being considered."

Travellers pay price of advice

Randeep Ramesh

Passengers could be paying double the price of a rail ticket or face being stranded if they follow the instructions from the national telephone inquiry service, according to a Consumers' Association report released yesterday.

The association's magazine *Which?* also claimed that compensating payments for travellers who have been inconvenienced by delays and cancellations are both confusing and inconsistent.

In a survey of four rail companies South West Trains - which had to cancel dozens of trains every day earlier this year - was rated the poorest in providing passenger information.

When *Which?* sought information from the National Rail Enquiry Service (NRES), it got incorrect details in 41 out of 70 cases.

Researchers said that the service gave the right price just four out of 21 times when they asked about the cost of travel-

ling from Basingstoke in Hampshire to Carlisle in Cumbria and returning via London.

Some NRES staff told passengers to buy two single tickets for nearly £130 - £60 more than necessary, *Which?* claimed. It found the service gave wrong information about engineering works that might affect travel times six out of fourteen times.

In a survey of passengers using Connex South Central, South West Trains, ScotRail and West Anglia Great Northern, *Which?* found that the latter had the highest commuter rating for providing information and SWT the lowest.

"Many people would like to switch to public transport but are unlikely to travel by rail if they can't rely on getting the correct information," said the magazine's senior editor, Andrew McIlwraith.

The *Which?* findings follow warnings last month from the rail regulator, John Swift, that train companies faced big fines if the performance of the NRES did not improve immediately.

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news

Time for a change as Butlin's says bye-de-bye to the past

Glenda Cooper
and Andrew Yates

It has been the butt of endless jokes, sent up in *Carry On Camping* and the television sitcom *H-H-D-H*. Yet Billy Butlin's vision more than 60 years ago to provide a "week's holiday for a week's wage" transformed the nation's attitude to holidays. Since then, the fortunes of Butlin's have provided a slice of social history reflecting the leisure pursuits of the British public from the invention of the knobby knees competition to the modern-day introduction of the Modern Dads Cafes.

Yesterday, its owners, the Rank Group, announced that the centres are to undergo a multi-million pound facelift designed to take the concept into

the new millennium, saying the revamp will once more revolutionise the holiday industry.

Butlin's holiday camps at Minehead, Skegness and Bognor Regis will all be overhauled, with the centrepiece of the new development a "skylight pavilion", a weatherproof canopy the size of Wembley football pitch designed to house anything from comedy acts to West End shows. Holidaymakers will also be able to see a film at the local Odeon, drink in themed pubs or have a flutter at the Meccano bingo hall while packing the kids off to activity centres.

The new camps will house of string of high-street names including Burger King and Harry Ramsden's fish and chips.

It seems a far cry from Butlin's beginning. When the first



half-page advertisement for the camp at Ingoldmells, on the Lincolnshire coast ran in the *Daily Express* offering a week's holiday by the sea for between 30 shillings and £3, Butlin's was deluged with 10,000 replies.

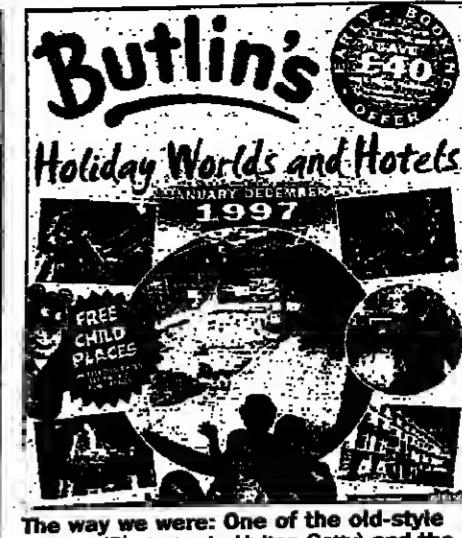
Not only was Butlin offering affordable holidays but he also promised that the accommodation would be better than that at home. The Butlin's motto - "Our True Intent Is All For Your Delight" - was so exaggerated.

There was waiter service in the dining room, electric light in the chalets and hot running water in the bath blocks - facilities that many people in the 1930s did not have at home. Before Butlin's, the families who did get away stayed in boarding houses where they were forced to leave after breakfast and stay out all day regardless of the weather. Butlin's was offering a swimming pool and a 4,000-seater stadium for

greyhound and cheetah races. In the best tradition of British holidays, it was snowing when the first camp opened. But there were no complaints from the holidaymakers - for many, it was their first holiday. And because it was, many of them had no idea what to do. In desperation Butlin sent a young worker out to buy a red jacket and encourage people to join in. The Redcoats were born, and the job was to hire a new generation

of showbiz personalities: Jimmy Tarbuck, Charlie Drake, Tommy Steele, Anne Diamond, Isla St Clair, Des O'Connor and Michael Barrymore all took their first steps to stardom wearing the famous scarlet jacket. Inevitably, Butlin's became a victim of its own success.

People became more sophisticated, and as air travel became cheaper holiday firms were able to offer packages abroad with the one thing that



The way we were: One of the old-style camps (Photograph: Hulton Getty) and the new-look brochure

History of a very British holiday

1936: Skegness camp opens on Easter Saturday. It snows.

1938: Second camp opens at Cuckoo Lagoon passed entitling workers to a week's paid holiday a year.

1939: Nearly 100,000 holidaymakers visit Skegness and Clacton.

1945-62: Period of

expansion culminating in launch of eighth camp at Minehead.

1964: Billy Butlin knighted.

1972: Butlin's sold to the Rank - takes over a million bookings.

1983-5: Clacton and Filey closed and sold.

1986-96: £180m invested in modernisation.

Butlin's could not guarantee: sunshines. Rank is now attempting to re-vamp Butlin's image in several ways. The traditional chalets are to be replaced by a range of up-market accommodation: the skyline pavilions will aim to attract an increasing number of contemporary entertainment acts; "oases of calm" will be provided for the older generation; and even the Redcoats are to get a new uniform.

All this will come at a price, however. A family of four could have to pay up to £70 a week during the peak summer months, compared to less than £300 today, under some of the special offers available.

Butlin's two other sites, at Pwllheli and Ayr are to be converted to "Haven" camps - all-action parks offering everything from tenpin bowling to indoor swimming pools.

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Lottery cash for parks, says poll

David Lister

The public wants lottery money spent on making parks safe for children, not on buying works of art, according to a poll carried out for one of the main distributors of lottery cash.

The MORI poll commissioned by the Heritage Lottery Fund – but not released to the national press – found that parks, particularly national parks, remain the top priority for preservation. And public priorities for funding focus on providing access for disabled people and ensuring local parks are made safe for children.

Buying works of art – a cause on which the Heritage Lottery Fund has so far spent millions of pounds – struck the public as “the least urgent use of lottery funds”.

Equally, support for the preservation of museums, stately homes and gardens and industrial heritage has fallen sharply over the past two years. Only 29 per cent see museums as a priority for preservation (a 14 per cent drop since 1995), only 13 per cent cite stately homes (a 16 per cent drop) and only 11 per cent cite industrial heritage (a 12 per cent drop).

Thirty-six per cent are unhappy with the whole concept of lottery money paying for heritage projects. They wish to see more money given to charities and health, and are also believe that Camelot, the organiser, is taking too much money from the lottery.

The findings will have considerable implications for the

use of lottery money by the Heritage Lottery Fund, which is chaired by Lord Rothschild. They will also cause alarm bells to ring for museums and art galleries which look to the Fund to buy works of art for them, and will now fear a change in policy.

As a spokesman for the Heritage Lottery Fund said yesterday: “This is part of a large consultation programme and we will be studying the comments, made before issuing new guidelines for the distribution of lottery grant by the end of the year.”

The Fund has distributed £680m of lottery money in total, with £324m going to museums and galleries, and £30m purely on buying works of art.

David Barrie, director of the National Art Collections Fund, said last night: “There is a real danger of the definition of heritage being stretched to breaking point. It is very important that the HLF be available to buy great works of art. Local parks are supported by local government. Museums and galleries have no money at all to purchase works of art.”

MORI interviewed almost 2,000 people. As well as respondents stressing the importance of more access to parks for the disabled (81 per cent) and making them safe for the young (76 per cent), there were marked increases in believing it very important that projects given lottery funds benefit the local community and that they help protect the countryside.



Safeguarding: Fireplaces are stored and restored at Edinburgh's Holyrood Architectural Salvage. Photograph: Colin McPherson

Staying one step ahead of the fireplace thieves



A property owner in Queen Street takes precautions

Jason Bennetto

Property owners in Scotland have become so fed up with criminals breaking in and stealing antique chimney pieces that they are having them removed and advertising their properties as “fireplace free zones”.

The bizarre crime prevention measure follows a spate of burglaries in Edinburgh in which gangs of thieves have ripped out fire surrounds which can be worth up to £20,000.

Georgian homes in Edinburgh and old city-centre businesses, particularly in the financial section, have been targeted in the past eight months. The most sought-after designs are by the famous 18th-century Scottish architect Robert Adam.

Many businesses in the centre of Edinburgh have relocat-

ed to green field sites, leaving their former premises empty. These have then become an easy target for the fireplace crooks.

The combined cost of the damage caused by the break-in, having the fireplace torn from the wall, and the loss of the chimney piece itself have persuaded some property owners to remove the item of desire before the criminals arrive.

Once the fireplaces have been stored at a secure location the owners have been placing cards in the windows informing would-be burglars not to bother.

Warning notices for criminals are already used by motorists to try and prevent thieves smashing their car windows in search of hi-fi equipment. The next stage could be individuals hanging a sign around their necks saying “don’t mug, no money”.

Getaway driver told police of killings

Jason Bennetto

Crime Correspondent

A getaway driver for two killers who used shotguns to execute three fellow drug dealers in a country lane later became a police “supergrass”, a court heard yesterday.

The three men were allegedly killed in Essex over a row about a consignment of poor quality cannabis. They were lured to their death by a bogus promise of a major new cocaine deal.

Following the execution, one of the killers likened himself to the “angel of death”, the Old Bailey court was told.

The accused murderers, Michael Steele, 55, and Jack Whomes, 36, were driven away at high speed from the shootings, allegedly laughing at their actions in shooting the men in the head as he waited in a Land Rover on a snowy night in December 1995.

Steele “said he felt a bit like the angel of death – he had

done everyone a favour and got rid of the sort of people you would not want around”, said Andrew Munday, QC, prosecuting.

Steele, from Clacton, Essex, and Whomes, from Brockford, Suffolk, wore surgical gloves, overalls and Wellington boots for the murders at point blank range and afterwards were splattered with blood, according to counsel.

Whomes and Steele have denied murdering the three men. They – and a third man, Peter Cory, 45, from Clacton

– also deny conspiring to import cannabis in late 1995.

Steele believed that Mr Tate had threatened him over an earlier shipment of poor quality cannabis and decided with Whomes to eliminate the threat, the prosecution has alleged.

Patrick Tate, 37, Anthony Tucker, 38 and Craig Rolfe, 26, all from Essex, were killed in Rentenden, Essex.

Whomes and Steele have denied murdering the three men. They – and a third man, Peter Cory, 45, from Clacton

– of the vehicle he put shins into each of their heads within a matter of moments.

“He said it was a natural act – almost as if he was doing something else. It was emotionless,” he said.

Mundy told the jury: “He said that he, Steele, had shot one of the deceased with both barrels because that person had moved. He said he had re-loaded and shot the other two and the gun had fallen apart. The case continues.

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Climate of change: In the West, an environmental triumph; in the Far East, a growing catastrophe

German forests return to health

Imre Karacs
Bonn

They are there at the edge of every German town; inviolable barriers to progress, places of worship for the romantic soul, and the source of angst for a nation living in fear of modernity. In the 1980s the brown-bellied bats of oak and pine became the symbol of decline, spawning the most powerful environmental movement in the world.

The planet still needs to be saved, so the Greens continue to enjoy the support of one out of every seven German voters, and have excellent prospects of entering the national government next year. But the forests are returning to rude health.

"Studies going back to 12 years show that initial pessimistic forecasts of the imminent death of our forests were false," states the government's first report on the nation's woodlands. The report, published yesterday, says that the condition of trees has been improving since 1994.

In that year, 36 per cent of all German trees appeared to be undamaged. In 1996, 43 per cent received a clean bill of health. In the same period, the proportion of severely damaged trees has fallen from 25 per cent to less than 20 per cent.

Although the scientific jury is still out on the exact causes of the disease which gripped Europe's forests in the past decade, the government's experts attribute much of the damage to pollutants. Nowhere in the 80-page document is acid rain mentioned, but the acid-forming sulphur dioxide gas is singled out as one of the chief culprits.

Such diagnosis certainly fits in with the alleged cure. The government puts itself on the back for passing anti-emission laws which were aimed at reducing the noxious fumes held responsible for the epidemic.

The first such law was enacted in 1983, in response to pressure from environmentalists. As a result of these measures, Germans now drive the cleanest cars in the world, mandatorily equipped with catalytic converters. The greening of industry appears to have been less successful, as any visit to the belching towers of the Ruhr can attest.

But at least the car is off the hook, to the great joy of Germany's most powerful lobby. The government report appears to show that technology can be harnessed to the benefit of the environment, and progress is not always destructive.

Yet the Greens still carp, pointing out that low-emission engines de-



Falling out: Trees on the old border with the East Bloc, which was a potent source of pollution

Photograph: Environmental Images

Malaysia calls in a rainmaker to wash away the smog

Richard Lloyd Parry

In the Klang Valley, the heart of industrialised Malaysia, they have not seen the sky for two months, and in parts of Brunei motorists have been driving with their headlights on during the middle of the day. In Kuala Lumpur, cases of asthma are up by 50 per cent, and dozens of flights have been cancelled.

The Indonesian government, which began by blaming it on the poor, yesterday placed responsibility with the rich, and its environment minister, Sarwono Kusumaatmadja,

called the situation a "national disaster".

What 19th-century Londoners knew as smog and modern Athenians refer to as the *nephos* (clouds) has finally come to South-East Asia. Here it is known simply as "the haze" – a thick cloud of smoke and pollutants which has hovered over the region's cities for much of the summer. Yesterday, for the first time, the Malaysian government announced its intention to hire private rain-making aircraft to seed clouds to wash away the worst of the haze. "We are facing a serious threat to the health

of 20 million people," Mr Kusumaatmadja said.

No one wants to take responsibility for such a disaster, but its broad causes are fairly clear. The reassuring explanation – reassuring because it lies beyond the control of any government – is an atmospheric phenomenon known as El Niño – the "Christ Child". El Niño sounds unexciting – a warm ocean current which originates off the coast of Ecuador every two to seven years (frequently around Christmas, hence its name). But the consequences of a powerful El Niño, like the one now surging

across the Pacific Ocean, are devastating and amazingly widespread. Storm fronts batter California. Unseasonal rain soaks Israel. Billions of plankton perish off Peru along with the marine animals which feed on them, crippling the country's fishing industry. And South-East Asia suffers extended droughts. According to Mr Kusumaatmadja yesterday, this year's monsoon rains are not expected until December, two months late. The drought is bringing failures of rice, coffee and maize crops as far away as Java and North Korea.

It is also creating the dry condi-

tions ideal for forest fires. Most of these are in Indonesia, whose government seems unable to make up its mind about their extent. On Monday, 740,000 acres were reckoned to have been burned, but yesterday this figure was reduced to 250,000. Either way, the smoke they are producing is drifting across from the huge islands of Sumatra and Borneo and blanketing the region.

In another about-turn, the Indonesian government has absolved those originally fingered for starting the fires – indigenous tribes people practising traditional slash and burn

farming. Mr Kusumaatmadja says he true culprits are "big bosses", the owners of Indonesia's many lucrative logging concessions who have cleared vast areas of rain forest for timber and for rubber planting. "While bosses of large plantations just walk into their air-conditioned offices if the situation becomes too smoky, these voiceless people have to take all the blame and suffer from suffocating smoke," he told the *Jakarta Post* newspaper.

But it is not the fires alone which are too blame. As in Victorian Britain, or post-war Greece, smog is a result of high-speed industrialisa-

tion, the very industrialisation which has transformed South-East Asia into the world's fastest growing economic region. In the Klang Valley, around the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur, 10,000 new vehicles are sold every month. The affluence which has accompanied this growth has given Asians opportunities which they could never have imagined a generation ago. This year, however, it is also depriving them of what they could never have imagined losing – the sun in the morning, and the sight of the blue sky above their heads.

Leading article, page 17

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Bounty hunter killings echo the Wild West

David Usborne
New York

The killings in Arizona last weekend of a couple in their bed by a posse of bounty hunters has thrown the spotlight on a violent arm of the American justice system that recalls the "Dead or Alive" posters of the old Wild West.

Arizona police confirmed that five men, who described themselves as " fugitive recovery agents", broke into a Phoenix home at 4am on Sunday morning apparently in pursuit of a California man who had jumped bail.

What happened inside has outraged America and prompted politicians in Arizona to call for laws curbing bounty hunters, whose lucrative trade is to track down runaways on behalf of bail bond agencies.

Armed with long-barrel handguns and clad in black ski-masks, the men burst into the house, held a couple and three children at gunpoint and then sledge-hammered their way into the bedroom of Chris Foote, 23, and his girlfriend, 20-

year-old Spring Wright. A gunfight ensued after Mr Foote fired a handgun beside his bed. In a hall of bullets, two of the bounty hunters were wounded. Mr Foote and Ms Wright were killed outright.

Police believe that the raid was a blundershine there is nothing to connect the residents with the man being sought by the bounty hunters. "It's a mystery to us," said police spokesman, Mike Torres.

Leading a campaign to change the Arizona law is Chris Foote's father, Tom. "I used to think I was safe in my house," he said. "Now I don't. This could happen to any family."

In all but three US states, bounty hunters can operate without a licence and with fewer controls than legitimate police officers. The legality of the industry is based on a Supreme Court ruling of 1873 - in an era when the western frontier was still being established.

Experts believe that there are as many as 2,000 bounty hunters in the US, benefiting from the pressures of overflowing courtrooms and prisons. It is thought

that of the roughly 35,000 people who jump bail annually, as many as 87 per cent are brought to justice by bounty hunters.

The lack of controls is highlighted by so-called "bounty-hunting schools offering "full" training courses in three days. Alternatively, aspiring bounty hunters can simply buy starter kits which include a black kit bag, leg irons, handcuffs, pepper spray and an all-black outfit of T-shirt, jacket and cap.

"There's been little change in the law since the territorial days when bounty hunters were used by sheriffs to look for people who had robbed stage-coaches," said Arizona State Senator, John Kaites. "In 1997 we need other means to keep innocent people from getting hurt."

Three of the men involved in Sunday's incident are now in police custody in Phoenix and face charges of second degree murder. Yesterday, however, a full-scale manhunt was underway for the other two members of the posse who were described by police as dangerous.

A Cambodian farm worker watching the burning wreckage of a Vietnam Airlines jet that crashed into a rice paddy yesterday as it approached

Phnom Penh airport in heavy rain. Two young children were believed to be the only survivors from the Soviet-built Tupolev 134, which was carrying 60 passengers and six crew, on its flight from Ho Chi Minh City. Most of the victims were from Taiwan and South Korea. Photograph: Reuters



significant shorts

'Harassment' drives Soros out of Belarus

The Soros Foundation said it was pulling out of Belarus because of harassment of its employees and other... barriers to its activities in the hardline former Soviet republic. Relations had grown increasingly tense since March, when the Foundation's local executive, Peter Byrne, was barred from entering Belarus. He was accused of sponsoring the opposition, including members of the mass media who criticise President Alexander Lukashenko's authoritarian style of rule. In March Washington cut off \$40m (£22m) in aid because of Minsk's human rights record. Reuters - Minsk

Chechens stage public killing

Russia's rebel Chechnya region staged its first public execution yesterday, putting to death by firing-squad a young man and his wife found guilty of murder by an Islamic court. Hundreds of people gathered in the centre of the capital, Grozny, to urge on the masked executioners as they stood the couple against a wall and shot them at point-blank range. Russia's Interfax news agency said the man's second wife had also been sentenced to death but was later pardoned because she was pregnant. Reuters - Grozny

Tarting down

Mexico City prostitutes won a right to ply their trade in exchange for wearing sensible clothes and behaving nicely. In a deal with city authorities they agreed not to wear see-through clothing or skirts more than four fingers above the knee before 10pm. Reuters - Mexico City

THE INDEPENDENT

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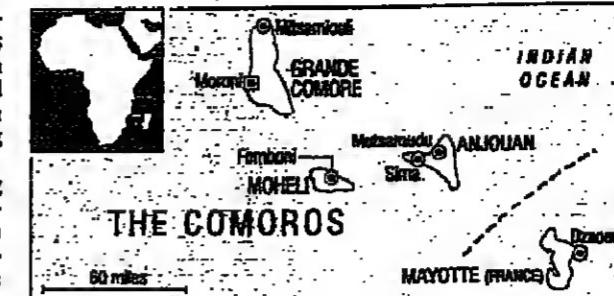
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international

Comoros troops invade rebel island



Resistance: People in the Anjouan town of Mutsamudu passing stone barricades erected by separatists last month. The Comoros government said yesterday that military intervention had pacified Anjouan without bloodshed. Photograph: AFP



Moroni (Reuters) — Government troops on the Comoros group ignored appeals from Africa and France yesterday and invaded the island of Anjouan to try to end a month-long secession by force.

After days of sabre-rattling and preparations, two boatloads of troops landed early in the morning according to diplomats in Moroni, capital of the Indian Ocean archipelago.

President Mohamed Taki's government later confirmed the operation. "The security forces are progressively re-establishing the republican order, the freedoms and the safety of persons in Anjouan, mainly in Mutsamudu and Domoni," a statement from the presidency said.

Diplomats said the invasion targets were Anjouan's main town and port of Mutsamudu, the airport at Ouani four miles east of Mutsamudu and the town of Domoni.

Anjouan, the second largest of the three-island group of the East African coast, seceded on 3 August after months of protest, civil unrest and clash-

sion of coups to most of the country's 670,000 people. The legendary French mercenary Bob Denard has played a prominent role in several of those coups. But there was no suggestion he was involved with either side yesterday.

A European who arrived from Anjouan said: "The islanders appear determined to face the Comoran army at whatever cost. I fear this invasion may turn into a bloodbath."

Mr Taki's government has asked the OAU to postpone until October its all-party conference on the Comoran crisis. The talks at OAU headquarters in Ethiopia are planned for 10 September.

Poverty in Comoros contrasts with comparative anti-France funded prosperity on the island of Mayotte, which remains under French rule.

"The situation which was created on 3 August was unacceptable," said yesterday's government statement on Moroni radio. It accused Anjouan leaders of distributing drugs to young people since pro-secession violence began last March.

Exam question lands professor in PLO prison

Discussion of corruption brings down wrath of Arafat's police

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

Ten weeks ago Fathi Subuh, professor of education and social problems at Gaza's Al-Azhar University, asked his students in their third-year final examination to comment on the reasons for corruption in the Palestinian Authority (PA), which rules the Palestinian enclaves, and in the university itself.

"What are the types of administrative corruption in the governmental departments? What are the reasons behind it?" reads the exam paper set by Dr Subuh. The question seemed relevant since in a poll this July, 45 per cent of Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank said that corruption was prevalent in the PA and 41 per cent said it was common.

The Palestinian Preventive Security police did not see it that way. On 2 July they arrested Dr Subuh. The students' essays were later confiscated. Bassam Eid, of the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group, says Dr Subuh was detained at Tel al-Hawa interrogation centre where "his hands were tied and he was beaten". His wife, Fatima, said that when she eventually saw him - his lawyer has been denied access - "He looked like a man who had come out of his grave."

Dr Subuh, who was interrogated for 40 days, is due to appear before the Palestinian high court in Gaza on 9 September, to find out if he is to be charged. Even if its verdict is favourable his troubles may not be over. Last month Preventive Security simply ignored a court order asking it to explain why it had arrested Dr Subuh in the first place.

The security police have a problem. They have never officially admitted that they are holding Dr Subuh because he raised the issue of corruption, although the confiscation of the exam papers points to the real reason for the arrest. Instead,

they say he is suspected of collaboration with Israel, working for the United States and the Russians and sexually harassing a female student. Given that Dr Subuh was arrested 23 times by the Israelis and the student says no harassment took place, these charges may be difficult to sustain.

In the meantime, Dr Subuh, who is 43, has gone on hunger strike for the second time. "Bad news," his wife said yesterday when asked about her husband's condition. "I've just heard that he went back on hunger strike two days ago. He says that in a week's time he will stop drinking any liquid. I know he has a strong will and he will do what he says."

Mr Eid says a striking aspect of the case is that Dr Subuh has received no support from his university, other professors or his students. This may be in part because Dr Subuh asked his students to comment on corruption at the university. Al-Azhar university has set up a committee to ask Dr Subuh why he set "unacademic questions" in the exam.

The case underlines how little attention the Preventive Security police pays to the Palestinian judicial system and how it portrays any critic of the Palestinian Authority as a collaborator with Israel. In May, Daoud Kuttab, a Palestinian journalist, was arrested in Ramallah for broadcasting the proceedings of the Palestinian parliament on television. Mr Eid says he knows of 117 Palestinians held without trial by the PA and the real figure is probably higher.

Some Palestinian leaders admit that they pay a high political price for the popular belief that the PA is corrupt. Abdel Jawad Saleh, PA minister of agriculture, says Palestinians cannot be united or mobilised

"until people feel the PA is not corrupt". He said that in spite of waste and corruption in his ministry he had not been able to sack anybody.

Karadzic ally hints at trial

Belgrade (AP) — One of Radovan Karadzic's closest allies yesterday suggested that the former Bosnian Serb leader wanted to negotiate over demands that he be tried on suspicion of war crimes. Momicilo Krajisnik made the offer in Pale, a Karadzic stronghold, at a meeting with the UN rights investigator Elisabeth Rohn.

He said he wanted her to meet Mr Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb army commander, who has also been indicted by the UN war-crimes tribunal. "I suggested... I would play a role... to arrange a meeting of Mrs Rohn with Karadzic and Mladic." Mrs Rohn could mediate between the tribunal and Gen Mladic and Mr Karadzic.

Mr Krajisnik's comments indicated that the Bosnian Serbs' former leader and his associates were feeling pressure put on them by the international com-

munity, which has increasingly come down on the side of the current Bosnian Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, in her struggle against them.

Mr Krajisnik was a wartime associate of Mr Karadzic, and is believed to speak for Mr Karadzic, who is in hiding because of fears he could be snatched by Nato commands and forced to stand trial.

Mrs Plavsic appeared to be gaining the upper hand in her struggle with Mr Karadzic yesterday after the top Bosnian Serb general, Pero Colic, the army chief of staff, called her "supreme commander" - acknowledging Mrs Plavsic as his superior. Gen Colic late last month put himself squarely in the Karadzic camp. His switch to her side would further weaken Karadzic loyalists and help Western powers in the struggle to isolate the former Bosnian Serb leader.

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Garden cheers: Boris Yeltsin and the Russian Orthodox Patriarch Alexy II at the opening of the square and gardens of Christ the Saviour cathedral in Moscow, destroyed by Stalin in the Thirties but recently rebuilt. Photograph: Reuters

Packer surrenders in newspaper war

Robert Milliken
Sydney

A struggle for control of Australia's media scene involving the country's biggest press barons took a dramatic turn yesterday when Kerry Packer, the country's richest person, announced he was selling his stake in the Fairfax newspaper empire.

Mr Packer and Rupert Murdoch, his main media rival, have brought strong pressure on the conservative coalition government led by John Howard over plans to change the laws on media ownership. Mr Howard had suggested that the government would scrap cross-ownership rules forbidding television proprietors from owning newspapers in the same city.

This would have allowed Mr Packer to realise his ambition of taking over the Fairfax group, whose newspapers are the rich-



Kerry Packer: Takeover of newspaper group thwarted

est and most influential in the country. They include *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* in Melbourne and the *Australian Financial Review*. The Packer family already controls Australia's biggest magazine empire and Channel Nine, its most powerful commercial television network.

Last month, as Mr Howard recovered from severe pneumonia, he was visited in his official Sydney residence by Rupert Murdoch and his son, Lachlan, who runs the Murdoch Australian publishing empire. The Murdochs are believed to have urged Mr Howard not to relax the cross-ownership laws, fearing such a move would give Mr Packer the lion's share of Australia's media in a market where Mr Murdoch's activity, as a United States citizen, is curbed by other laws restricting control of television networks by foreigners.

The Packers had been confident of taking over Fairfax. James Packer, Mr Packer's son and heir, boasted last May that the family's company, Publishing and Broadcasting, hoped to own it by Christmas. But on Monday, the government stunned the industry when it announced that it was indefinitely deferring plans to change the media ownership laws. The Packers lost no time in registering their displeasure when James Packer announced yesterday that their company was selling its 15 per cent holding in Fairfax, its limit under present laws, because it no longer wished to be a "passive investor".

The Fairfax newspapers have been fought over by some of the world's richest media moguls at the next election.

CORREZE DAYS

What's so funny about black socks?

In the profound darkness of a wooded ridge, high above the gorges of the Dordogne River, angry Gallic cries disturbed a languid, storm-threatened evening. "We are the Earth team. Earth leader where are you?"

"Go away, I can't help. I am the Fire leader and I've lost my team." Since I was part of the Air team, and as far as I could tell, our entire group was hopelessly lost, I couldn't help much either.

Fifty grown people, and one seven-year-old boy, were stumbling about in the gloom and heat, trying to locate three simple games – darts, trivial Pursuit and a memory contest – hidden somewhere in the 70 acres of grounds of a small château with pointed, fairy-tale turrets.

It was Charlie's fault. I had seen quite enough of holiday entertainment, French-style, at the karaoke evening the night before. (In French karaoke, quavering renditions of Edith Piaf replace tuneless versions of Frank Sinatra; "La Vie en Rose" and "Je Ne Regrette Rien" stand in for "My Way"). But Charlie, aged seven, is a devotee of entertainment of any kind, from opera to *Noel's House Party*. He insisted on taking part in the fun and games every night.

Our task was, on a modest scale, like *Jeu des Frontières*, meets orienteering. The teams had to locate and complete all the hidden challenges and get back to the converted barn which was Fun HQ. The sadistic twist was that no team could attempt a challenge until every member of the group was present: hence the anxious waiting for friends lost in the dark.

This was not Butlin's, nor even Club Med. It was a charmingly disorganized family-run *colonie de vacances*: a three-star hotel, with three other categories of accommodation – bungalows, chalets and camp-sites – scattered in the surrounding forest. We were in one of the chalets and the only non-French family around.

There was a record number of foreign tourists in France this summer but we were in Corrèze. President Jacques Chirac's home *département*, which is pretty but unspectacular and not near the sea. The tourists were further south or further west.

The atmosphere was informal and relaxed: entertainment of the dottiest kind was provided but there was no enforced jollity. There were scores of rules and rigid timetables: but none was ever applied. No one rose before 10am. The *pistes de résistance* were the 19th-century château and its elegant, but grubby, Thirties swimming pool, overlooking ridge upon ridge of west-central France. It was as if this there had been another French revolution: the bourgeoisie had been disposed of.

and the château turned over to cheap holidays for the workers.

Holidays of this kind, in the green depths of France, away from the crowds, away from the foreigners, are becoming increasingly popular with French people, who, like everyone else, like to go on holiday in France. But our fellow holiday-makers showed no sign of resenting our interloping presence: amusement yes; resentment no.

One of our chalet neighbours was a muscular young Parisian policeman, with two neat, long-healed bullet wounds in his side. Aristide was on holiday with his wife (Francine), his mother-in-law (Francine) and two tough little boys, Mathieu and Thomas. At first, he would roar with laughter whenever he saw us, as if the concept of foreigners was irresistibly funny. Maybe it was my blue canvas shoes and black socks. Black socks, usually worn with sandals, are said by the French to be the certain sign of an Englishman on holiday.

There was also a strange little girl, aged four or five, who would come to stare at us but refuse to say anything. Clare,

'At first, he would roar with laughter whenever he saw us'

three, found the way to deal with her. She covered her from head to toe in pieces of grass: the little girl still refused to move or say a word.

But Charlie and Clare played boules with all the other children; and Charlie rode his bike with them into the woods. By the end of the week, even Aristide could almost talk to us with a straight face.

I was, however, cruelly discriminated against on the night of the manœuvres in the dark. Our team leader was an earnest young man who had missed the whole point and thought the idea of the game was to come first. When we finally located the Trivial Pursuit (in the camp-site showers), I came to his rescue. I knew what the capital of Ireland was.

None the less, when we found the darts, in a tumble-down hut, our leader brushed me aside. I may be useless at boules: Clare regularly defeats me. But as an Englishman, trained in the pubs of Staffordshire and Lancashire, I thought I had a national right to throw the darts. The leader insisted on doing it himself. He missed all the targets and we scored nul points. To Charlie's disgust, our team came last.

John Lichfield

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obituaries / gazette

Sir Rudolf Bing

During his 22-year tenure as the General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera in New York, Rudolf Bing was responsible not only for the move from the old theatre on Broadway to Lincoln Center, but for the even more traumatic move from 19th-century practice to 20th-century technology.

Arriving in New York in 1950, Bing found a company whose standards, once so high and bright, had stagnated and become tarnished. When he retired in 1972, Bing left a flourishing institution which could claim to be, with some confidence, the finest opera house in the world. This transformation was not brought about easily or without friction. Bing had to fight everyone – management, board, star singers, musicians, back-stage staff, unions and the press – to achieve all the changes and improvements that he considered imperative, but in the end he won most of those battles and when he could not win he managed a compromise.

Rudolf Bing became an opera administrator by accident. Born in Vienna in 1902 of a middle-class family, he was automatically taken to the opera and to concerts as a child. When his voice broke he developed a light baritone and studied singing for a while with the Finnish bass Helge Lindberg. On leaving school he decided to go into publishing and to that end went to work in a bookshop, Hugo Heller, which was also a concert agency. From 1921, Bing worked exclusively for the agency side of the business, which two years later was expanded to include opera and theatre. Bing started to travel around Europe and paid his first visit to London as manager of two concerts at the Albert Hall given by the British-born tenor Alfred Picaver.

After an unhappy year in Berlin, working for an agency that handled poor singers for provincial theatres, in 1928 he became assistant to Carl Ebert, the newly appointed intendant of the Hessian State Theatre, Darmstadt. It was here, juggling performances of Wagner with

comic operas by Lortzing and the operettas of Johann Strauss, that Bing learnt his trade as an administrator. Another unproductive period of six months working for a Berlin film studio was followed, in 1931, by a reunion with Ebert at the City Opera, Charlottenburg. A golden age was inaugurated when the conductor Fritz Busch joined Ebert for *Un ballo in maschera*. Two years later, after Hitler's accession to power, Bing as well as Ebert and Busch left Berlin.

Bing was briefly employed at Teplice in Czechoslovakia but by January 1934 he was back in Vienna, without a job. Then he received a letter from Busch, about "a very rich Englishman named John Christie" who had a country estate at Glyndebourne in Sussex where he intended staging a Mozart Festival. Bing was asked to hire artists for the first season. In which *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Cosi fan tutte* would be conducted by Busch and directed by Ebert.

Bing found the singers required and decided to move to London. After the second Glyndebourne season, during which he worked as assistant production manager, he was appointed General Manager. With Ebert, Busch and Bing together again, a second golden age had begun, but it lasted hardly longer than the first one, until the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.

Bing had applied for British citizenship but his papers did not come through until 1946 and he was technically an alien. During the war years he managed a tour of *The Beggar's Opera* for Glyndebourne, then ran the Sadler's Wells Ballet from its base at Dartington Hall in Devon. Later he worked for the John Lewis Partnership, becoming a divisional manager at Peter Jones. In 1944 Bing opened a new Glyndebourne office in London and began planning for the re-opening of the Festival after the war. Although involved in the production by the English Opera Group of Benjamin Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*,



Bing chats to some ballet dancers soon after becoming General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, New York, 1950. Photograph: Hulton Getty

which was premiered at Glyndebourne in 1946, by then he was already deeply involved in a new project, the Edinburgh Festival, for which Glyndebourne would provide the operatic element.

Bing was appointed Artistic Director, and at the first Festival in 1947 he provided a mouth-watering feast for culture-starved British lovers of music and theatre, whose delights included the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Renaud-Barrault company playing Marivaux and Gide's translation of *Hamlet*, as well as the Glyndebourne company in *Cosi fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. After the third Festival, which featured a new Glyndebourne staging by Ebert of *Un ballo in maschera*, Bing resigned, both from Edinburgh and from Glyndebourne; he had been appointed General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera. He went to New York in November 1949, in order to spend a year as an observer before taking up his new position at the start of the 1950-51 season.

The second Edinburgh Festival, nearly as exciting as the first, offered the Concertgebouw Orchestra and the Renaud-Barrault company playing Marivaux and Gide's translation of *Hamlet*, as well as the Glyndebourne company in *Cosi fan tutte* and *Don Giovanni*. After the third Festival, which featured a new Glyndebourne staging by Ebert of *Un ballo in maschera*, Bing resigned, both from Edinburgh and from Glyndebourne; he had been appointed General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera. He went to New York in November 1949, in order to spend a year as an observer before taking up his new position at the start of the 1950-51 season.

What shocked Bing most profoundly on his arrival at the Metropolitan was the lack of importance accorded to production. Used to working with European directors such as Carl Ebert, he was appalled at the way operas were staged, with little or no rehearsal, and by the extent to which singers were allowed to do exactly as they pleased.

He planned his opening production, Verdi's *Don Carlos*, with extreme care, engaging the American stage director Margaret Webster (a Shakespearean specialist) and choosing a cast that mixed familiar singers such as Jussi Björling and Robert Merrill with new voices from Europe such as

Boris Christoff. When Christoff, as a Bulgarian, could not obtain a visa, Bing replaced him with Cesare Siepi.

Bing continued to engage eminent, sometimes controversial directors from the world of theatre and film, including Baron Kanin, Alfred Lunt, Tyrone Guthrie, Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Peter Brook and Jean-Louis Barrault. He annoyed some Wagner-lovers by allowing Lauritz Melchior to leave, then outraged others by re-engaging Kirsten Flagstad (her husband was reputed to have been a Quisling during the war) to sing Isolde, Fidelio and Brünnhilde, which she did quite gloriously and to thunderous applause. Bing went to Europe such

as Renata Tebaldi also made her Metropolitan debut in 1955, as Desdemona in Verdi's *Othello*; she remained for 17 seasons. The following year Maria Callas made her debut as Norma; she only stayed for two seasons as in 1958/59 she refused to sing in a new production of *Macbeth* in alternation with *La traviata*.

This was the most momentous action taken by Bing during the entire period of his reign at the Met, as it opened the door for all the other immensely gifted black artists, headed by Leontyne Price and Grace Bumbry, who were sung there since.

The culmination of Bing's years at the Met should have been a new production, jointly mounted with the Salzburg Festival, of the complete *Ring* cycle, directed and conducted by Herbert von Karajan; in the event, only *Die Walküre* and *Das Rheingold* (in that order) were performed before Bing retired.

This was mainly due to the three-month strike which closed the theatre in the autumn of 1969, but partly to the antagonism existing between Karajan and Nilsson, an indispensable Brünnhilde in any *Ring* cycle.

Rudolf Bing, who had remained a British citizen throughout his time in the US, was appointed KBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours of 1971 for his services to Anglo-American relations. The following year, after his retirement from the Metropolitan, he published his autobiography, *5,000 Nights at the Opera*. For a while he lectured at Brooklyn College, City University. The final years of his life were marred by Alzheimer's disease.

Elizabeth Forbes

Rudolf Franz Joseph Bing, opera administrator; born Vienna 9 January 1902; General Manager, Glyndebourne Opera 1935-49; Artistic Director, Edinburgh Festival 1947-59; General Manager, Metropolitan Opera, New York 1950-72; CBE 1956, KBE 1971; Distinguished Professor, Brooklyn College, City University of New York 1972-75; married 1929 Nina Schelmskay (died 1983); 1987 Carroll Lee Douglas (marriage dissolved 1989); died New York 2 September 1997.



Dews: memorable effects

Photograph: Mander & Mitchell

Television may not have done the theatre much service – how many actors, writers or directors has it furnished for our delight as theatre-goers? – but the director Peter Dews was a dazzling exception.

After education at grammar school and Oxford University, and a year teaching in Yorkshire, he persuaded the BBC to take him on in 1953 as a Midland Regional Drama Producer for radio and television – they called directors producers then – and he learned all about the thrills and spills of broadcasting "live" in the days before all television plays were turned into films.

He also learned how to stage Shakespeare in a studio without our feeling we were watching it in a studio. Hence his Guild of Television Producers' Award for the best drama production of 1960 for *An Age Of Kings*, the BBC serialisation of Shakespeare's history plays. It brought, every fortnight for over 30 weeks, the Bard to the box, almost as if it were a natural thing to do and not something

that which now looks absurdly quixotic. It serialised Shakespeare's histories from *Richard II* to *Richard III* and, though the writer Alan Melville may have called it an Eternity of Kings as it trundled through the Wars of the Roses, when can we hope to come again on such enterprise?

The young Dews had dabbled in amateur dramatics and he went on staging plays in the provinces, including two Shakespeare's for the Oxford University Dramatic Society (*Henry IV* and *Henry V*) in 1962, while he was with the BBC. But it was what he learned in the confines of a studio, and amid its disciplines, that equipped him for his years in the theatre; and though other directors may have graduated in his way, he must have been the most accomplished of a breed which I doubt we shall see the like of again.

He went on to give playgoers some of our best nights in the theatre. He tackled not only Shakespeare, but Peter Ustinov, whose *Hadrian VII* (1968) gave Alec McCowen one of his best ever parts as a man who imagined

himself to be the Pope; Robert Bolt, whose *Viva! Viva! Regina!* (1970) first saw the light under Dews' direction; Royce Ryton, whose *Crown Matrimonial* (1972) brought Wendy Hiller and Peter Barkworth back to the West End as Queen Mary and Edward VIII; Jean Anouilh, with *The Director of the Opera* (1973); and Christopher Fry, whose *A Sleep of Prisoners* directed at Chichester Cathedral in 1978. Indeed it was in Chichester's famously amphitheatrical auditorium that Dews' achieved some of his most memorable effects as a director – and disasters as an actor.

He got Margaret Leighton as Cleopatra to John Clement's *Antony* (1969) to lie stock still for 20 minutes during her death scene with cumulative intensity – by placing her downstage of the permanent structure. By the same device he got Eileen Atkins as Elizabeth in *Viva! Viva! Regina!* to sit still for 15 minutes at a council table while Burleigh and Leicestershire downstage; though he allowed

the actress one slight reflective move which was later deemed unnecessary.

That was another play for which Dews had devised a new ending. The first had been for Anouilh's *The Director of the Opera* in which he placed a tiny model opera house for the character to gaze at in the final scene. For Elizabeth he contrived that Atkins, as she was being brought downstage, having spoken her final line, should turn her head slowly once to either side. Bolt's drama had been imagined by its author in terms of an end of pier show, somewhat in the manner of *Oh, What A Lovely War*. As soon as Dews heard of that idea, he sniffed: "They'll call it Oh What A Lovely Whore!" And that was the end of that.

His bloody revival of *Julius Caesar* (1977), in which the title character underwent 22 stab wounds, used the audience itself to play Antony's "friends, Romans and countrymen", with rabbble-rousers round and about the auditorium. It provoked a round of applause. As far as anybody

of his powers, picturing himself – amid the drab, shabby surroundings of the old playhouse – translated to Rome as the Pontiff in all his finery, a religious maniac trying to get his own back.

From the same humble auditorium a month later came Dews' hauntingly snowbound revival of *As You Like It* (1963), a model of updated Shakespeare – no stars and no crowds in the house either; hot witty, charming and exquisitely detailed.

Who can be surprised if a few years later, when the Birmingham Council decreed that there should have a new civic playhouse – of twice the size and not a quarter of the atmosphere of the Old Birmingham Rep – if Dews chose not to stay to course as director for more than a season or so after it opened?

Adam Benedict

Peter Dews, actor and director; born Wakefield, Yorkshire 26 September 1929; married 1960 Alan Rhodes; died 25 August 1997.

During the Japanese occupation, most Europeans left the islands but Tantri stayed on, going to Java. She was later accused of collaborating with the Japanese, but always remained evasive about what actually happened during the Second World War. In her autobiography, *Revolt in Paradise* (1960), she suggests that she was imprisoned and tortured by the Japanese and describes the years 1942-45 as "terrible, horrible – the terrible time – I don't want to talk about that time".

After the war she became committed to an independent Indonesia and broadcast for the radical guerrilla armies from their headquarters in East Java. She was known to the Allies as "Surahaya Sue". She later joined Sukarno's official republican administration, writing speeches for him; she described Sukarno as "the most impressive man I have ever met". Despite her involvement with subsequent Indonesian governments it must have upset her to discover that her name is missing from all serious books on the country. Was she deliberately omitted, or was much of her involvement fantasy?

By 1947, she had left Indonesia for Australia, but as she had no passport she was not allowed to stay; she went on to America where she wrote *Revolt in Paradise*, a book which was both widely and well-reviewed and much translated and which,

despite its inconsistencies, probably contains more than a kernel of truth. For the next 30 years, she tried to get *Revolt in Paradise* made into a film, travelling all over the world staying in smart hotels at the expense of various film companies. But since she refused to alter any details of the book, offer after offer collapsed. When, in the late 1980s, by then a permanent resident of Australia, it became apparent that no film would be made, she cut herself off from the world and became increasingly suspicious of people. The writer Timothy Lindsey got to know her in her old age, which was spent in a nursing home in Sydney, and his recent book *The Romance of K'tut Tantri* (1997) does much to explain, without destroying, the

essential artifice and romance of this enigmatic woman.

Sarah Anders

Muriel Stuart Walker (K'tut Tantri), journalist, novelist; wife; born Glasgow 19 February 1885; married Karl Pearson (died 1957); died Sydney 27 July 1997.

Cooper, "Sir Peter Lely at the Court of Charles II", 1. (pm).

Tate Gallery: Jonathan Blanchard, "Sculpture in Stone", (pm).

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Gloucester accompanied The Duchess of Gloucester when the National Portrait Gallery's exhibition "400 Years of Royal Portraiture" in Frederiksborg Castle, Denmark.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guards. Horse Guards Parade, 1pm.

National Portrait Gallery: John

Romance was the key to K'tut Tantri's extraordinary character and life. As journalist, hotelier, guerilla fighter and writer with particularly close links to Indonesia, she jealously protected her history by deliberately obscuring her past, by endlessly changing her aliases and by constantly reinventing herself.

From what can be pieced together, it seems that Muriel Stuart Walker was born in Glasgow in 1885; her mother was from the Isle of Man and it is probable that she never knew her real father. Underfed by this, she invented a life for him as an African explorer who disappeared in the jungle. She and her mother went to California in the years after the First World War, where Muriel Walker got work writing about Hol-

lywood and the film industry, until one day in 1932, after seeing a film about Bali, she packed her paints and embarked on a new career and life in Indonesia.

Between 1930 and 1932 she had married an American, Karl Kenneth Pearson; she often said that he had been killed in a car crash with their two children, but there is no evidence that she ever had any children and she remained married to Pearson, an alcoholic, until his death in 1957. Pearson was older than her, and throughout her life she looked for a protector in older men, insisting that all her lawyers, producers and directors were men who could protect her.

When she arrived in Bali, she dyed her red hair black to es-

cape comparison with a witch and was renamed K'tut (Balinese for fourth-born child) Tantri (possibly a Balinese pronunciation of "Tenchery", a name by which she sometimes went). She spent her first year painting and learning about traditional Balinese custom through her association with its royal family; she became especially close to the Raja's son Anak Agung Nura whom she described as her "princely soulmate", but she always denied any sexual involvement with him. Although Bali in the 1930s was Bohemian and personified the age-old Western search for paradise, attracting many writers and painters, any sexual relationship between Europeans and Balinese was frowned upon.

Leaving her royal behind, Tantri settled at Kuta, then a tiny fishing village on the south coast, where she was involved in opening the first hotel; she had many disputes with her business partners but certainly played a part in Bali's thriving pre-war tourist industry, becoming increasingly fond of the Balinese and increasingly disdainful of the Dutch colonists. She became known as "Mrs. Manx", after her mother's birthplace, and indeed there are similarities between Bali and the Isle of Man which have appealed to her ideas of romance: both are mystical, quirky, independent islands. Diana Cooper stayed in Tantri's beach hotel and wrote about her visit in *Trumper's From The Sleep* (1960), describing her as "no

disappointment – old girl Manx, fifty, 4 ft high, a mop of black hair and a Mother Hubbard garment."

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BIRTHS

REED: On 21 August to Lucy (née Davison) and David a daughter, Isabella Florence.

DEATHS

CAVE: Eric FLA on 2 September 1997 aged 83. Husband of Angela, father of Judi, Nick and Rachel. City Librarian of Cambridge 1954-

The pea-souper that shrouds environmental debate

It is the fate of post-war generations to live with the knowledge that the survival of civilisation depends on our collective ability to regulate our planet's environment. Today we report a dramatic example, as the Malaysian government announces its plan to seed clouds with silver iodide crystals to produce rain to try to wash away the smog that has darkened the sky over Kuala Lumpur for two months. The delay of the monsoon in south-east Asia means that many of the big cities in the region are now permanently enveloped in an old-fashioned London pea-souper, thickened by smoke from forest fires across peninsular Malaya, Sumatra and Indonesia. This is not the only current example of local climate manipulation: this year, the authorities in China are also engaged in modern rain-making, adapting anti-aircraft guns to the purpose, trying to fill the dry Yellow River with water.

Meanwhile, in another part of the forest, we report the findings of a German government survey of the state of its woodland: it seems that the trees are recovering from the onslaught of acid rain, the great environmental cause of a decade ago. It would seem that the collapse of the dirty heavy industries of the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Central Europe, combined with strict emission controls on German industries and cars, has saved the green and pleasant bits of Bavaria.

So, is the big picture one of the industrialised nations getting their "green" act together, while the newly-industrialised countries struggle to deal with the environmental consequences of rapid economic growth? Unfortunately not, unfortunately in the sense that such a summary might imply a happy scenario of progressive improvement as best environmental practice spreads along with high living standards around the globe.

The reality of the environmental crisis facing the world is a great deal more complicated than that. The outlook for the sustainability of life on this planet is also gloomier than such a vision of inevitable progress implies. The truth lies somewhere between two extremes. At one extreme are apocalyptic forecasts of imminent catastrophe – based not on science but on emotion and even millenarianism. At the other extreme is the complacent view that economic development is the best solution to environmental problems. Dr Mahathir Mohamad, prime minister of Malaysia, is an abrasive proponent of this second argument. When Western politicians tried to lecture him about the need to preserve the rainforests in his country, he pointed out rather tartly that we in the West had already cut down our forests, so were in no moral position to tell him what to do. He might point out, too, that the pollution haze which has blocked out the sky in Kuala Lumpur

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is similar to the smogs which blanketed London until prosperity and clean-air legislation made the stars visible again. As Malaysia gets richer, it too will be able to afford cleaner local air.

The flaw in this argument is the remorseless growth both of the world's energy use and its population. A symbol of the increasingly hectic disorder of industrialisation is the Petronas Towers, which last year became the tallest building in the world – but still not tall enough to escape the thick smog of Kuala Lumpur: a monument to Malaysia's economic ambition and to the region's environmental crisis.

It looks, then, as if Robin Cook will have to upset Dr Mahathir again, as he did this week over human rights in the region, if Britain is to pursue a foreign policy which respects the environment as well as people's liberties. This is not a matter of the rich West pulling up the ladder of economic prosperity behind itself, because if Asia, Africa and South America are to pursue higher living standards which can be sustained for more than a generation, then the peoples of North America, Europe and Japan will be called on to change their lifestyles dramatically. Hence the real significance of the acid

rain story is how small-scale it is in the order of global priorities. The balance of scientific consensus is that the forests and lakes of northern Europe have been poisoned by industrial activity, although the chains of causation are more tangled than initially thought. The measures taken to clean up power station emissions and to fit catalytic converters to car exhausts may be beginning to reduce acid rain and improve the quality of the air that we breathe. But they have taken a long time, and are a small gust of fresh air in a growing whirlwind of pollution. Against the overriding challenge of exponentially-growing energy use, which is undeniably causing global climate change (even if the nature of that change is as yet unclear), slightly cleaner emissions in some of the richest and most energy-hungry countries of the world is a side-issue.

It is against this background that we must ask whether some environmentalists are in danger of hurling the very important cause which they profess to advance. Yesterday, a National Consumer Council report drew attention to the difficulty of knowing whether or not recycling bottles and paper is worthwhile; what matters is the amount of energy used throughout the whole life of a product, in its production, packaging, consumption and disposal. Recycling only happens at the end of the process.

It is the inability to distinguish

between the important and the trivial which bedevils the "green" movement. Our schoolchildren are now indoctrinated by green propaganda, a largely unremarked development which could have a dramatic effect on popular values in years to come, except that far too much of it equates the dropping of crisp packets with the threat to the ozone layer. Green values are generally good ones to transmit to our children, but facts and science must be separated from emotion and polemic.

Lots more silver in the lining

They said turning building societies into public limited companies would unleash their entrepreneurial drive. And so it has turned out. We can only marvel at the capitalist verve of Abbey National, which has hit on the ingenious idea of charging people £1 to queue in its branches, a wheeze which started yesterday. Some clever business-school graduate has obviously noticed how the British love queuing, and pointed out the money-making potential of charging them for doing so. It has been said that if four people form a queue on a busy British street, others will join them out of force of habit. A huge untapped market beckons.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Royal Family fails nation in its grief

Sir: Whenever there is a debate about the monarchy's future, the usual suspects trot out to tell us sagely that the Royal Family is an invaluable focus of national crisis, a rallying point for our collective anxieties. But as this week's events prove to be the greatest emotional crisis since the war, where are the royals now?

Where are these assorted military princes and dukes offering some recognition of the grief and affection for the mother of the future King? Many expressions of sympathy for the young Princes have gone unacknowledged. Do the Princes even know the cooers they are eliciting? Or are they Princes in the Tower, locked away from this no-doubt embarrassing display of public emotion "for their own good"?

The frozen silence which has followed the dismally inadequate notice issued by the Queen and her eldest son, adopting the stilted formality used for the victims of a train crash or distant earthquake, explodes the myth that, in a crisis, we need the comforting presence of old-style royalty. So it should not surprise them that a growing proportion of a bereft nation decides that, under any circumstances, it doesn't really need them at all.

GERALDINE PRINCE
Edinburgh

Sir: While I can sympathise with private grief and the need to keep the public's gaze away from a bereaved family, the Royal Family cannot escape its role as a public family. And, once again, they show us exactly why Princess Diana will be much missed. No public statements of support for the people of Britain. No contact. No reassuring glimpse of warmth or informality. No mutual understanding. No real relationship.

And this cold distance at a time when people in Britain are showing so much obvious public sympathy to support each other. The message the Royal Family sends out is that the curtains are shut, the doors are locked and the British public are on their own.

MARGARET KEETON
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire

Sir: The Princess of Wales, mother of a possible future king, died on Sunday. It is now Wednesday and still there has been no word to her people from the present Queen.

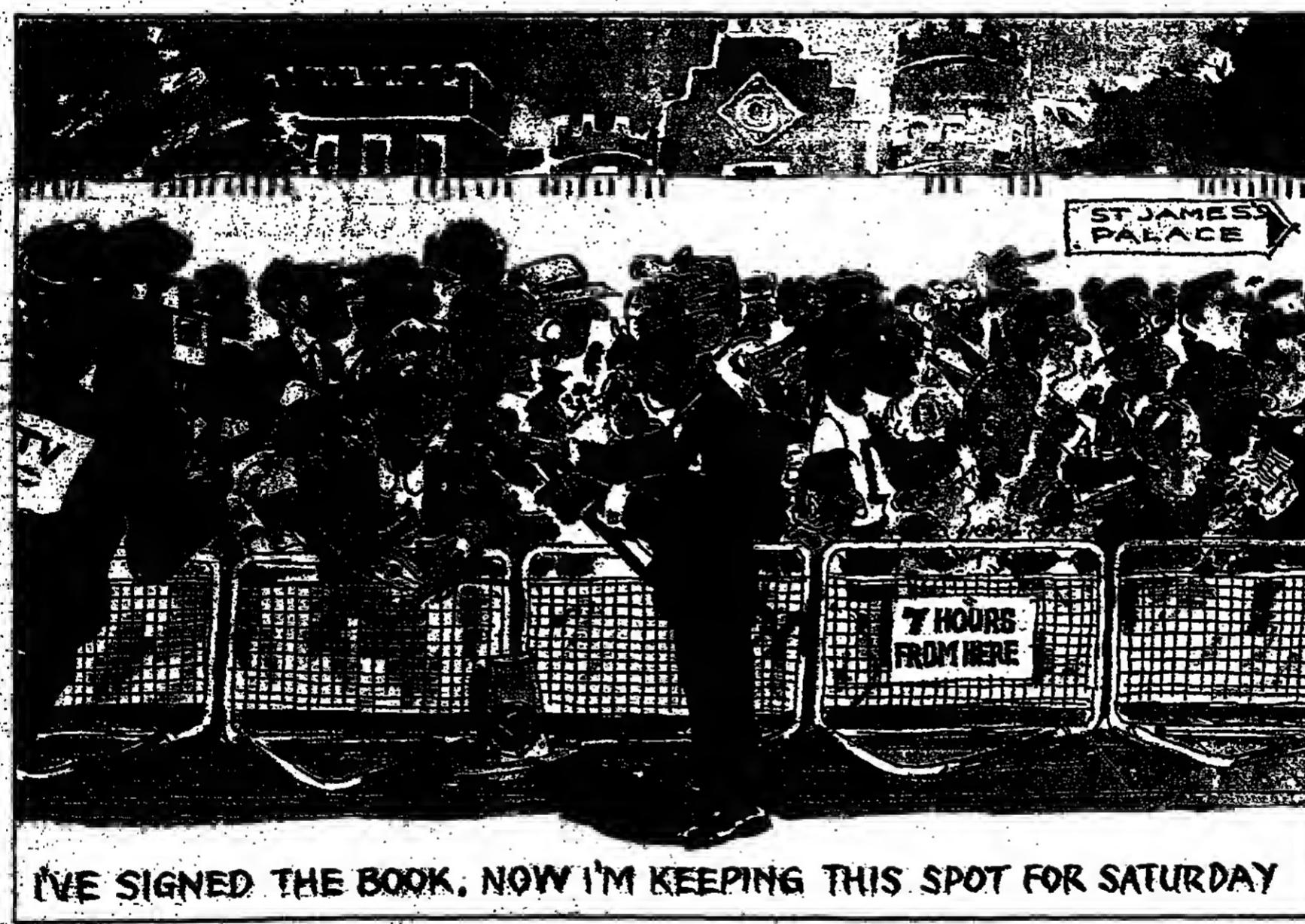
Whether or not the Royal Family choose to prescire a rigid reserve – because it "dare not weep" – surely a simple personal message from the Queen transcends choice and is what should be expected of a monarch and as a human being?

MARION DRAFFIN
Groomebridge, Kent

Sir: Polly Toynbee (1 September) is right to draw attention to the problem that has been created for the Palace, following the rapid canonisation of the late Princess.

She goes on to raise the fear that Prince William might ponder what of his difficult parents to blame.

Should the Prince's mind turn that way, he will have to look higher than his father, a mere pawn in the game. The whole sorry tale came about because the Prince of Wales was not allowed a free choice of whom he could marry. First choice was royalty, second must be nothing less than legend. Virginity was a fact hoped-for "extra". Despite the fact that his life is impossible to live in



I'VE SIGNED THE BOOK. NOW I'M KEEPING THIS SPOT FOR SATURDAY

anyone's terms, Charles was and remains a dutiful son and heir – just as William is expected to be.

The British are notoriously juvenile about matters sexual and if we could not accept 16 years ago that the Prince of Wales could make a free choice, perhaps we can now. If so, we will all have grown up a little bit.

SIMON ALLEN
Little Gaddesden, Hertfordshire

Sir: Diana, Princess of Wales, was in Paris of her own volition. At her own insistence, against the better judgment of the Palace, she had no official protection. She died as a result of being driven by a drunken chauffeur, an employee of her lover's family, into a concrete pillar at high speed.

As you say (leading article, 2 September), some people will hold the Royal Family in general, and Prince Charles in particular, in some way responsible for this tragic event. They are being irrational to the point of idiocy, and in the frenzy of bad taste which has surrounded Diana in both life and death, there are no reasonable or dignified steps the Royal Family can take to counteract such prejudice.

Your suggestion that Prince William's emotional competence must be in question as a result of his attending Eton would be cheap at the best of times. It is a vile thing to write when the boy must be feeling emotion enough at the death of his mother. You might be better employed questioning the emotional competence of a family member ("If only the royals could weep with the people" 3 September).

Should the Prince's mind turn that way, he will have to look higher than his father, a mere pawn in the game. The whole sorry tale came about because the Prince of Wales was not allowed a free choice of whom he could marry. First choice was royalty, second must be nothing less than legend. Virginity was a fact hoped-for "extra". Despite the fact that his life is impossible to live in

Sir: Diana was royal by marriage. That marriage was squashed emotionally by the future King, and terminated formally at the insistence of the present Queen; Diana herself has been comprehensively ridiculed by the Palace establishment – the Enemy.

It passes my understanding why the Palace is in any way involved with arrangements for her funeral. The family, including her sons, could be supported quite well by the Prime Minister and his staff at 10 Downing Street, representing her constituency – ordinary people.

JOHN DEAKER
Hythe, Hampshire

Sir: Your leader (2 September) and Michael Knowles' letter (2 September) were courageous in identifying where the buck stops in the search of the causes of Diana's death. Blame the unhappy Trinity of paparazzi, press and public as you wish, but it was ultimately the Royal Family who destroyed the Princess of Wales.

When middle-aged ladies queuing for eight hours to leave their personal tributes to Diana say to TV cameras, with evident contempt, that they wouldn't do this "for the rest of them", then the House of Windsor ought to be quaking. No wonder they hide at Balmoral.

Mrs MOIRA ROSS
Strathearn, Ross-shire

Sir: You criticise the response of the Windows to the most devastating of personal tragedies, the loss of a family member ("If only the royals could weep with the people" 3 September).

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. Fax 0171-238 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

September). How distasteful would we as a nation regard a Hollywood-style display of weeping, if we knew the intention was to engender popularity and public sympathy.

Sorrow is a deeply personal experience and the dignified silence of those most deeply affected throws into sharp relief the theatrical excesses of the public grieving competition in which we all seem to be embroiled.

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JOHN DEAKER
Hythe, Hampshire

Sir: Discussion about the apparent dysfunction of the Windsor family misses a more fundamental point.

To a democratic society all monarchy is dysfunctional.

The most useful legacy of Diana Windsor would be the establishment in this country of a republic. An open and creative project for that purpose, which embraced all the people, might provide a paradoxically appropriate memorial to the life-work of a "people's princess".

SPENCER HAGARD
Cambridge

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Sir: You criticise the response of the Windows to the most devastating of personal tragedies, the loss of a family member ("If only the royals could weep with the people" 3 September).

How to beat the paparazzi

Sir: As long as there are members of the public who are curious to peer into the private lives of public figures, there will be money to be made by those who do the peering. A ban on invasion of privacy will not work.

Our problem is one of market failure. A scarce resource, namely the private image of a public person, should not be owned by the photographer or by the publication which purchases it from him. True legal ownership should rest with the subject of the photograph.

Misuse of the image without the permission of the right owner would be a cause of legal action against the publication and the paparazzo to recover their wrongful profits.

If such a regime had been in place before last weekend, every tabloid which published photographs of Princess Diana and Dodi on their summer holidays would have been required to pay the resulting profits to them.

I do not think that it would take too fine a legal mind to distinguish between public events, such as speeches and hospital visits, and private events, such as a ski trip with one's children or a ride in a car with a friend.

GUY SPIDER
New York

Sir: Your photographer, Brian Harris, is mistaken in trying to pass much of the blame on to the public

("Don't shoot the messenger: look to yourself", 1 September), for contributing to the death of the Princess of Wales.

The media, and the popular press in particular, is a very powerful tool, or weapon, that moulds and generates opinion as much as it feeds it. Even the press must now concede that there is an uncrossable border between the demand for pictures of the rich and famous, and crawling over the wreck of a crashed car, taking pictures of the dead and dying; the pictures of which, in this case, must surely be impounded by the French courts as the photographers were contravening the French "good samaritan" law at the very moment they took them?

MISS MARJORIE DAWSON
London E17

Sir: I find your headline of 2 September ("Killed by drunken driving, not fame") deeply offensive.

The state of Diana's driver in no way exonerates the behaviour of the jackals that pursued her. These people, supposedly acting in the public's interest, conducted themselves like a frenzied pack of animals, acting solely in self-

interest in the hope of benefiting from the huge pay-offs that newspapers and magazines offer.

You surely have to ask yourself what the driver was trying to avoid.

MARK ASHWELL
Maidenhead, Berkshire

Sir: There is a large constituency, possibly a majority, in this country for whom the death of Princess Diana is no more tragic than the premature death of any other human being. The way the media, and the BBC especially, have behaved puts me in mind of the old Soviet Union on the death of a party leader.

NEAL CHAMPION
Stamton, Gloucestershire

Flowers not guns

Sir: The Princess of Wales was campaigning against landmines, which makes the choice of a gun carriage as a vehicle for her coffin singularly inappropriate.

A flower-filled open carriage surrounded by the charities and children she supported would reflect the public mood in a more suitable way.

FELICITY BINYON
Dr EMMA CREWE
BEL CREWE
Branxton, Norfolk

Sir: Isn't there a danger that the mass expression of shock and grief over Princess Diana's death is turning into idolatry? A news item showing pictures of the Madonna left at the Spencer family tomb left a feeling of unease.

One is reminded very strongly of the films shot at the time of the death and funeral of Eva Peron and the hysteria engendered.

Mourning and sympathy for Diana yes, sainthood no. Mrs J WARMAN
Bromley, Kent

Beware idolatry

Sir: Isn't there a danger that the mass expression of shock and grief over Princess Diana's death is turning into idolatry? A news item showing pictures of the Madonna left at the Spencer family tomb left a feeling of unease.

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Mourning and sympathy for Diana yes, sainthood no. Mrs J WARMAN
Bromley, Kent

Diana's coin

Sir: In the St James's Palace queue on Monday, I discovered a dazzling multi-sided coin in my change which I, for one, will always call "a Diana": the new 50p. KEITH M. HARRIS
Steeple Bumpstead, Suffolk

Funeral song

Sir: There could be no finer funeral tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales than a specially modified "Candle in the Wind" sung by Elton John. PAUL WALTER
Newbury, Berkshire

essay

The onset of globalisation poses a real threat to the protective, comfortable and ordered lifestyle that German citizens have long taken for granted, says Rupert Cornwell

For a snapshot of post-war German history, look no further than the long, narrow harbour of the great maritime city of Kiel. On the eastern side, beyond the HDW and Preussing shipyards, twisted concrete blocks jut from the water, remnants of U-Boat pens smashed by allied bombers during the Götterdämmerung of 1945. Exactly opposite, on the western bank, boulders of private yachts, fruit of the wealth amassed during half a century of subsequent recovery, rock softly at anchor. But an even more revealing symbol passed almost unnoticed a few weeks ago. A giant floating tri-dock for ship repairs left for a permanent new home from the Suez Canal. An introduction, among many others, to a strange, half-understood beast called Globalisierung.

To Anglo-Saxon ears, "globalisation" has a bracing ring, promising access to the economic wonders of the world. For Germans however, the term conveys only menace, of a new and unforgiving single world economy that takes no prisoners, where jobs and capital move unimpeded from country to country, threatening the very survival of the cosy, protective system under which they have prospered for 50 years. A fearful, mostly unspoken suspicion abounds, that a post-war era may be closing.

Outwardly little seems to have



Job seekers in Berlin – unemployment in Germany is double that in Britain, shredding old economic certainties

Photograph: AP

Fear stalks the Fatherland

changed. The Teutonic quest for a perfectly ordered life continues. Deutsche Bahn has installed waste bins on railway station platforms divided into four different-coloured sections, each for a different category of recyclable. In Bonn, the municipality has installed electronic signs along main streets informing drivers exactly how many places are available in nearby parking garages. Imperceptibly but relentlessly however, the new order advances. "We're at a watershed," says Horst Siebert, member of Chancellor Kohl's five-man Council of economic advisers and director of the influential World Economics Institute at Kiel University. "But neither the politicians nor the people understand what globalisation means for Germany."

Already though some old

certainties are in shreds. No longer is Germany top of the economics class. Italy – the same feckless Italy that Germany used to bail out with multi-billion-dollar loans secured by Banca d'Italia gold – now has a lower inflation rate. Britain, long Europe's basket case, is enjoying a sustained boom. The air is thick with warnings that the generous pensions, welfare and health care benefits its people take for granted are no longer affordable – yet unions are girding up for battle, to reduce the working week from 35 to 32 hours.

The unemployment rate is almost 12 per cent, double that of Britain. And now the deutschmark itself, ultimate symbol of this most successful chapter of modern German history, is to disappear. Just like

Italians, Spaniards and Frenchmen, Germans will have to make do with the unknown, untrusted euro.

"What is the matter with our country?" asked Roman Herzog, the German President, in a now famous speech last spring after a visit to the Asian tigers on the Pacific rim. There all was dynamism, but "here the mood is overwhelmingly despondent ... a feeling of paralysis pervades our society". There was a loss of momentum, "an ossification and a failure to modernise ... an unbelievable mental depression".

Germany being Germany of course, nothing is ever simple. Could this not be merely a new outbreak of angst immemorial in a people for whom no silver lining is complete without a leaden grey cloud? And indeed, in the short term, another hard German perennial may be about to blossom – an exported upswing. Fuelled by a weaker currency, the monthly trade surplus in June of DM15bn (£4.5bn) was the largest in eight years. Growth in 1998 could be a very decent 3 per cent. And "Made in Germany" remains a byword for the excellence of a manufacturing sector which still comprises a third of the total economy (double its share in Britain).

But take the young London foreign exchange dealer in a radio interview this summer,

asked to explain yet another drop in the value of the mark against the pound. "The mark's a dying currency, isn't it," he said, "and the markets kind of feel Germany has had it." Even a year ago, such words would have been unimaginable. Now foreign exchange dealers are not the fount of all wisdom. And even if they were, a dash of *Schadenfreude*, forgivable after endless German economic over-achieving. Nor does trust in Germany matter as it did when the country was the biggest prize in the Cold War and the likeliest battlefield for a bot one. As Europe seeks to forge a common currency, and prove it can compete with the US, the Asians and an emergent China, the last thing it needs is a creeping crisis in the continent's pivotal economy.

Health inspectors would have shut the place inside a week. Above all there is demography. Germany is growing old – so old that by 2010, under the country's company-financed social security system, employee contributions will have risen to an intolerable 50 per cent of wages if nothing is done. And that is before income tax.

But as the Fatherland slowly burns, the politicians fiddle, unwilling to confront the interest groups, above all the elderly, who vote for them. The whiff of *fin de régime* is everywhere. Not perhaps quite the stench that permeated the last few years of Toryism, but inevitable when one man and one coalition have been in power for 15 years. Suddenly Chancellor Kohl looks tired, unable as he once would have been to stamp out squabbling within the centre-right coalition over a pre-election reshuffle. Where though is the German Tony Blair? "We need new ideas, new people," even a prominent Kohl supporter admits, "but we just don't have them."

Only next spring will the SPD select its *Kanzlerkandidat*, but the current choice is not inspiring. Oskar Lafontaine, the left-winger who lost to Kohl in 1990, in the third of his four consecutive election victories since 1982, is yesterday's man, and for all his PR gifts, there are legitimate

doubts that the other leading contender, Lower Saxony's Minister-President Gerhard Schroeder, is tomorrow's. And Germany's predicament differs from Britain's in another way. In Britain, Margaret Thatcher did the necessary dirty work. Now it is Germany's turn to introduce similarly required market-oriented reform – but at the very moment when the "right-wing" government, more ideologically equipped to do so, seems about to leave the stage. Dare the Social Democrats offend their own supporters and administer the necessary medicine?

Inevitably, the already meagre public esteem for conventional politicians has tumbled, and simultaneously a grassroots activism buried deep in German historical tradition has re-emerged. In Bonn this week for instance, posters have been advertising a *Bürgersprechtag*, roughly a town hall meeting, on the theme of "How sick is our democracy?" The question is legitimate: German democracy is ailing. Not, of course, in the sense of an imminent relapse into totalitarianism, and no comparison is more absurd than that of today's republic with Weimar. Nowhere, the US included, does a constitution contain stronger checks and balances – which is a very large part of the problem.

Take the Bundesrat, the upper chamber of unelected

representatives from the federal Länder or states, designed to prevent an excessive concentration of power in the executive government. This summer though, the main claim to fame of an SPD-controlled Bundesrat was to block vital needed tax reform endorsed by a majority in the elected Bundestag, or parliament. Unsurprisingly, calls for constitutional reform multiply. No one though believes there is the remotest chance of the two thirds majority in the Bundestag to secure it, and equally unsurprisingly, many despair of the country's capacity to reform itself. Naturally the Germans have a word for it. *Reformstau*, or "reform jam".

So what happens next? Possibly, though the odds are against it, a fifth Kohl victory in 1998. It is astonishing but true that never in the history of the Federal Republic has an electorate voted out a sitting chancellor. Safe, solid and predictable is how Germans like it, and Helmut Kohl, never a politician to be underestimated, is the embodiment of these virtues. The opposition sets no one alight, and the economy might be growing fast enough to make inroads into unemployment. Some think he does not intend to serve a full term, staying on long enough to see the euro into being before resigning.

And with or without Kohl, all is not lost. Having identified the problems, surely a people that is among Europe's best educated, and certainly its best organised, can solve it. If not, harsh market forces will. Already too, amid the squabbling, the coalition and the SPD are hinting at a readiness to strike a partial pre-election deal in tax and welfare reform. The government too may soon be over the hump in its aid for the old East Germany, presently running at DM150bn (£51bn), or 4 per cent of GDP a year – a burden which makes it mildly miraculous that Germany is within spitting distance of the 3 per cent Maastricht budget deficit guideline. Then there is the impending change of capital; replacement of Bonn's environs by the provincial vassals with the metropolitan fizz of the Berliner Lust will surely lift national spirits (albeit, inevitably, foreign apprehensions about Germany as well).

And if the current Thai débâcle is anything to go by, maybe the Asian dragons aren't quite as terrifying as advertised.

But the world, and *Globalisierung*, will not wait. This summer, a stone's throw from Kiel harbour, Professor Siebert's Institute held a convention on the subject of "Newly declining countries". For once Britain is not among them (though perhaps it falls into the "long declining" category). Nor is the Netherlands, nor even Italy. The two the organisers had in mind were France, and above all Germany. Can it make the necessary adjustments, or will it be gently overtaken by economic old age? With the reassuring certainties of the Cold War just a memory, that is the new German question.

The Impact of Fees

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THE INDEPENDENT

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For most of us, the River is another country

You're probably sick of this by now," said our hostess as she served up soup to us one day in London last year. "On the contrary," we said. "We don't eat soup that often. We're not at all sick of it. We quite like soup."

"Not soup," she said. "Not soup generally. This particular soup. This soup of Delia's?"

"Yes – it's from her new book. We've had it all over the place at other people's houses this summer. I just thought you might be sick of it by now."

The soup was very good and we had never had it before, but then we live beyond the Delta Smith belt. Perhaps I should say that we live beyond the cook-book belt. But it happened to us again the other day, and outside London too.

"I hope you haven't had this too often before," said our host, as he served up a very strange concoction which looked like a model of a ruted ski slope but which turned out to be sea bass cooked under a crust of sea salt. "It's from *The River Café Cook Book*." For some reason

this stuck in my craw more than Delta Smith did. Well, Delta Smith is on television and therefore a national phenomenon, but the River Café is somewhere in London and therefore of no immediate interest to me. I live on the edge of the West Country, which makes me a provincial, but people who live in London, and are therefore also provincials, never see themselves as being provincial. When people in London talk about the famous River Café (as even this paper did when serialising their rather cumbersome recipes) they assume we all know where it is. I can't think why. If I were to refer to one of the many splendid restaurants in Bath or Bristol, I would have the decency to tend to explain its location, so why can't I?

Well, you get the point, and anyway time passes and no doubt the famous River Café Cook Book is moving out of fashion and some other book is moving in and London hosts and hostesses are apologetic about some new repertoire of flavours and fads. Did I read somewhere that cooking with wood-fired ovens is the new thing? Or is Moroccan cooking the flavour

of the month? Something equally far-fetched. Poor old folk in London. They are so provincial they have no identity and have to clasp on to something to keep them afloat. They are more sensible in Morocco, I hope. I doubt that in the depths of Tangiers the smart housewives are saying to each other, "I hope you're not tired of this English soup ..." It's easy to be a snob, I realise that. I found myself doing a very snobbish thing the other day. I was standing in New York looking at an airline poster – American Airlines, I think – which was urging people to fly



Miles Kington

in Birmingham, in England. And what do you think was the inducement they were using to get people in America to flock to Birmingham? It was contained in this couplet:

"Fly to the Castles
Without the Hassles!"

As an Englishman I found this instantly and doubly funny because a) "castles" and "hassles" don't rhyme in my part of England, b) I have never seen any castles in Birmingham. And yet I had no right to laugh, because it wasn't aimed at Americans, who would not only think it a good and proper rhyme but could easily find Birmingham a convenient jumping-off point to get to Ludlow Castle, Warwick Castle, Powis Castle, etc, etc. (Mark you, I still think I was right to laugh at another American slogan, coined by a mineral water firm in Texas. The Texans were trying to counter the threat of smart imported European waters. They came up with the fighting slogan: "Kick Perrier in The Derrrierel")

But it all depends where you stand. I heard an Irish

comedian on *Loose Ends* the other day say that she had come to the Edinburgh Festival directly from Ireland – "Over from the mainland," she said. There was a split-second pause, then a lot of laughter from the Scottish audience. I think that joke would not have got such a laugh in London. In Scotland they share a perception with the Irish that things look different depending on where you are. In Scotland they know that a thunderstorm in London is headline material but a hurricane in Scotland will be lucky to be mentioned low down in the news. Of course, a hurricane in Ireland wouldn't be mentioned at all. Have you noticed on the British weather maps that Ireland doesn't exist? Look at Cetacean weather maps.

Opposite Liverpool there is a small rag of a place called Northern Ireland which is not attached to any other piece of land. It looks odd to us up here in the sticks. We provincials are willing to bet that the British weather map on Cetacean was probably designed by some people down in London. Probably during a long lunch at the River Café. Wherever that is.

the commentators

We will pray for the saint in a backless Versace dress

Muslims, too, have been deeply moved by Diana's death. Fuad Nahdi explains why

The most photographed woman in the world remains an enigma to most Muslims. As the world prepares to bury the people's princess, imams, scholars and ordinary Muslims in the street are struggling to ascertain what exactly her status and legacy were, and how best to remember her. The extent of her influence, from the Hindu Kush mountains to the deserts of Arabia and the fountains of the Taj Mahal, is hard in measure.

To cancerous children in Pakistan, she was a bloode angel who brought the gift of smiles and attention. To glamour publications in the Muslim languages, from Turkish to Urdu, Malay and Arabic, she was the epitome of beauty, style and grace - and the secret to phenomenal circulation. To the princesses in the harems, she was the queen of fashion: her every dress her hairstyle, her walk - all were worthy of emulation. One of the better kept secrets of the Muslim monarchies are the scores of devoted Diana-look-alikes living in the royal palaces.

Coodooces have poured in from the most unlikely quarters - from Afghan Taliban guerrillas, hardly known for their woman-friendliness or love of royalty, to hard-core Palestinian activists and Bosnian Muslim soldiers touched deeply by her anti-landmine stance. Besides beauty and charm, Diana's biggest asset was that she seemed to stand above politics or ideology.

Yet the ambiguities, the paradox she embodied, loom large in the prurient Muslim consciousness.

Muslims warmed to her humanitarian acts, her genuine desire to generate compassion for those in need, but were warded off by a lifestyle that seemed incompatible with her stature. Many find it difficult to come to terms with a saint in backless Versace. Still, in a strange way the image of the princess was always, some could argue, Muslim-friendly, because her acts of charity encompassed individuals and causes from all parts of the worldwide Muslim community.

At the same time, however, British Muslims empathised with a different Diana. Many, themselves victims of another kind of alienation, felt they had a profound affinity with a woman marginalised by the Establishment. Diana wanted to be a royal in her own way, just as most Muslims in this country want to be British in their own way.

It is also with some bemusement that British Muslims watch the Janus-faced British media rush to canonise her before she is finally laid to rest on Saturday. For it was only days ago that every effort was made to run the Princess down, when her every mistake or misdemeanour (including having chosen a Muslim partner) was the cue for another bout of derision, when she was as near to being a saint as Baroness Thatcher.

Death may be the Great Leveler, but if anything, the passing away of Diana and Dodi has highlighted the different ways death can be handled: it can be an event of optional cathar-



Fundamental message of sympathy: condolences from an Afghan leader

... of mourning, is to see for Diana's funeral and a national day of mourning.

In a famous Prophetic narration, it is said that God castrates man with the words: "O son of Adam, I tell you and you visit Me not." He will say: "O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds?"

He will say: "Did you not know that My servant, So-and-so, had fallen ill? And you visited him not. Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found 'Me' with him?"

The thoughts and prayers of the entire Muslim community are at the moment with the living. Friday prayers all over the country this week will include invocations for patience, solace and guidance for Prince William and Harry, and for Prince Charles. For many a conscientious man, an extra prayer will be for another to step up and continue the good work undertaken by Diana, Princess of Wales. At the moment this seems difficult, for she is a "unique person". However, the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Or as the Holy Book puts it, "From Him we come, and to Him we return".

Fuad Nahdi is the editor of *Q-News*, a Muslim magazine.

Yes, I had a pleasant holiday, much of it spent staring at the North Sea as it crashed and boomed around the freezing but exhilarated children, and traipsing along the shingle dunes as they slithered heathen my feet. Having only the other day stood on Bondi Beach - so obligingly wide, so sun-kissed, so deliciously custard-yellow, so free of pebbles and rocks and things that make your feet bleed - I wondered about the odd masochism of the British *en fete*, the way they take their pleasures so grimly. The yachters, the polo players, the winter footballers, the long-distance cyclists, the pot-holders and bog-snorkellers ... Brits, especially posh ones, are ever happier than when they're doing something with grey skies overhead, grey water below, and lots of nasty breezes and bad light somewhere in the middle, as if enjoying their own resilience.

Of all the dubious pursuits the nation enjoys, the car boot sale remains the most mystifying. John Walsh

unloved domestic detritus. It was in the grounds of Glenham Hall, and the stallholders were - by invitation only - the owners of local stately homes and country estates.

It was quite a spectacle. Raj-style hammocks swayed in the breeze. Aristocratic types in tweeds sipped sherry at noon, offered each other smokes ("Care for a Havana? Only small ones, I'm afraid") and looked a little mortified at being briefly associated with Trade.

For an hour we drifted round the exhibits, wondering if an antique brass coal scuttle (with original shovel) could possibly be worth £300, no matter what its provenance. A silk-lined travelling vanity case with elasticated inner pockets, once a necessity while voyaging on the *Queen Mary*, was apparently a snip at £50. Gradually one's expectations of finding a complete set of Sévres dinner plates for a fiver dwindled. So did the level of trade. Elderly rusting claymores lay unclaimed on the grousing trestles. Sweat-stained Asco! binoculars were held to middle-class eyes and discarded adhesively weak. By the time we left, one thing



The mood of the times is volatile, unpredictable and unpredictable. What on earth does all this mean, commentators and politicians are asking one another? Where does it go from here?

Out there on the streets, queuing through the night for eight hours, these are not the usual royal freaks who camp out for wedding, jubilee or coronation. These are not readers of *Mayhem* who can quote every royal birthday. Many of them are surprised by their feelings. "I'm not much of a royalist but ..." "I was never interested in the royals but ..." Even in ovens, hardened old cynics are swept off their feet. Is this just a strange example of global hysteria?

The Royal Family are plainly at a loss to read the meaning of all this. They are behaving as if a revolution is taking place outside the gates of Buckingham Palace. And they may be right. Hiding away in their Balmoral fastness, it is as if they dare not face the people, cannot fathom the mood and they fear that it could turn nasty. For there is a growing groundswell of indignation out there. Where is the Queen? Why has she sent not one word of a message of regret, sorrow or condolence with anyone, not least her subjects? Why does no flag fly at half-mast over the Palace? Yes, the cognoscenti know that's because she is not in residence. But why is she not in residence? Dead bodies may not require company, but people are saying that Diana has been abandoned, left alone in her coffin with the mourners in the Mall.

She who stripped Diana of her HRH seems not to trust herself to the mercy of the masses, spilling out their hearts and flowers at her gates. Her life of frozen duty, stony faced and grim, may be admirable and full of noble self-sacrifice, but those "qualities" are out of fashion. Now people blame her for being a mother who put her duty above motherhood, keeping up appearances against all emotion, and they blame her for the miseries, comforted agonised him she raised.

How are she and Prince Charles to compose their faces through this ordeal? Weeping looks like hypocrisy; but dry eyes look as if they feel less than their subjects. Already the unforgiving public blame the monarchy for Diana's pathetic love-life. They took a young 19-year-old into their dysfunctional family, used her as brood mare and ejected her when she couldn't bear it.

Joining the monarchy is seen now by the people as something akin to marrying into the Adams family. Hardly surpris-



The Windsors are behaving as if a revolution is taking place outside the gates of Buckingham Palace. And they may be right

ing they all divorce. Feminists at the time of the wedding wore badges proclaiming "Doo! Do It!" Now the people on the streets feel they are cynically manipulated with the pageantry of an empty "fairy-tale" marriage.

That may be brutally unfair. Diana was not a simple young thing. She was already deeply neurotic herself. The one thing she shared with Prince Charles disastrously, was a calamitous childhood. But she is dead and pitted while Charles has to stand out there and shoulder the blame. The Diana myth is that the monarchy killed her. And now they fear the monarchy will destroy her sons too. The monarchy is turning into the people's enemy.

That may all be complete nonsense, but that is what a lot of the people in the crowds are saying, loudly. It's what the

phone-ins are saying. Royal reality is whatever the people think it is. The myth is all. They have created the dead Diana in their image and they are busily remaking their view of the Royal Family in her shadow.

Royalty only exists as an emblem. It has no substance, no role, no objective reality. As Diana so naffly put it, they have to be kings and queens of the people's hearts, or they are nothing. There were deeply unpopular monarchs in the past - but those days are gone.

The monarchy, surrounded by European republics, is here only on the people's suffering now.

People are not much interested in dry issues of constitutional reform. There is no significant republican political project. But what if they take against the Royal Family as individuals? What if they dis-

like the heartless institution that destroys those who marry into it or are brought up in it? Out there in the streets, they may be turning against the monarchy itself.

Commentators have been asking what the monarchy can do to make itself loved again? How can the Queen make herself more like Diana, less like her frigid Christmas messages? No number of Saatchis or Mandelsons can spin a new story for them. Cao they seduced Charles out hugging lepers, kissing babies at Great Ormond Street, laughing with children and old folk, weeping

with the sick? It's too late to restrain his shy and awkward body language. No, the royal advisers will pin their hopes on poor young William. After all he looks like his mother. But the chance of him growing up in Buckingham Palace balanced, happy and sane seem remote, if not impossible. The mad media frenzy will never abate.

So what should happen now? Charles is a sensitive, thoughtful, if tortured soul. If he has been tormenting himself in recent days with guilt and regret, then he should look to his sons and wonder how they at least can be saved from his fate.

There is only one brave and noble thing left for him to do. He must call an end to this pointless, painful, ignominious charade. In a few months' time he should renounce the Crown. He should recommend that the monarchy ends with his mother's life. The country should prepare itself to become a modern republic at a measured dignified pace, whenever that may be. After all, the Queen may live as long as her mother, Charles could be 75 when she dies and William 40. What are they to do with their lives beyond suffer in public all these royal humiliations?

And for the rest of us, are we to live with the fairy tale turned nightmare forever? We are infantilised by our obsession with this meaningless family and their myths. Moving though it is to see the whole world in tears, there is also something gravely distressing about such extravagant outpouring of passion and emotion on so empty a vessel as the Royal Family. Not even Dunhill caused such a national paroxysm. The pathos of Diana's story is dreadfully sad and the sight of her bereft children will be terrible to behold at the funeral. But the kindest thing for them would be to set them free from our unreasonable, insatiable emotional demands on them. Charles must know that better than anyone.

But it is we too who need setting free. It is time to grow up, into the 21st century, time to put aside childish things. We cannot live forever expecting so much attention and emotion on myths and phantasms of no significance. It demeans us. It demeans them. The anger of the people on the streets against the monarchy may be unfair, but perhaps at last it will break the spell and set us all free.

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Shareholders rebel over pay scheme □ Pentland investors uneasy at son's promotion

GEC faces revolt over executive options

Michael Harrison

GEC is facing a shareholder revolt at tomorrow's annual meeting over a controversial share option scheme under which a group of 250 top executives could receive eight times their salary as well as extra bonus shares.

At least two large institutional investors - Standard Life and National Provident Institution - have warned they will vote against the scheme and there were signs last night of the rebellion spreading.

A further four institutions - Norwich Union, Guardian

Royal Exchange, Equitable Life and Clerical Medical - are thought to be unhappy about the terms of the scheme.

The concern centres around the lack of sufficiently demanding performance targets attached to the options. Under one of the schemes the executives will be able to exercise so-called super-options if GEC does not more than achieve median performance in terms of total shareholder return compared with the rest of the FTSE 100 index.

This is the second year in a row that GEC has run into trouble over the issue of exec-

utive pay. When George Simpson, now Lord Simpson, took over as managing director last September, GEC was forced to tighten the performance targets triggering parts of his £10m pay package after protests from institutional shareholders.

Under guidelines issued by the Association of British Insurers, super-options are normally only exercisable if exceptional performance is achieved - which means being in the top quartile. In the case of GEC, 35 per cent of the options, which are worth four times salary, will be exercisable provided total shareholder re-

turn (increase in share price plus dividends) hits the median.

Guy Jubb of Standard Life said: "In my book that does not amount to exceptional performance. I hope the number of votes against the scheme and the level of abstentions will send a significant message to the GEC board."

There is also institutional unrest over another element of the remuneration package which allows GEC to give the executives bonus-matching shares equivalent to 25 per cent of the annual performance bonus provided half that sum is taken in the form of ordinary

shares. The award of the bonus shares does not depend on any performance targets being met.

Yvette Hoad of NPI said it had voted against both the super-options scheme and the matching bonus scheme because neither met ABI guidelines. "The performance criteria that trigger the options awards are not high enough and we are unhappy about that."

Another scheme entitles the executives to exercise share options again worth four times salary provided earnings per share growth exceeds the RPI by 6 per cent over a three-year period. This scheme is not be-

ing objected to but because of the way GEC is seeking shareholder approval for all the schemes under one composite motion, many institutions will be unlikely to vote against it.

Richard Regan, head of investment affairs at the ABI, said: "We want to see credibility restored in these long-term incentive schemes and the only way to do that is to ensure they have appropriate and demanding targets. GEC's scheme would appear not to be consistent with the spirit of our guidelines."

The indications last night were that the vote would be close although the GEC camp ap-

peared to be confident that he had secured the support of enough large shareholders to carry the day. However, opposition from a significant minority of large shareholders is certain to cause embarrassment for the group and may lead it to amend the performance targets attached to the schemes in future.

Lord Simpson and the board may also come under fire over the level of pay awards last year.

The group's annual report and accounts show that Lord Simpson received £1.141 million for seven months work last year, including a discretionary bonus of £160,000.

Row over roles halts Burford MEPC merger

Tom Stevenson
Financial Editor

Merger talks between Burford and MEPC were halted yesterday after the two property companies failed to agree on roles for their senior directors. The failure of the negotiations is an embarrassment for MEPC, which has come under pressure from its large shareholders to improve its performance or link with a stronger partner.

Any deal between the two companies would have created a property investment and development business with assets worth around £8 billion. It would have been the most significant tie-up in a sector which analysts believe needs consolidation.

It is understood Burford, one of the sector's fastest growing companies, approached MEPC in early summer, but the larger company only showed an interest after Burford's shares fell back from a high this year of 159p to a recent low of 111p.

Talks are thought to have foundered because Burford was only interested in an effective reverse takeover that would have seen its chairman Nigel Wray and chief executive Nick Lessau take top jobs in the enlarged group. This was unacceptable to MEPC, which is headed by James Tuckey, its chief executive, and Lord Blakemore, chairman. After it was announced the talks had come to nothing, Burford's shares fell 4p to 117p. MEPC closed 1.5p lower at 467.5p.

MEPC has come under pressure to rationalise its underperforming portfolio and withdraw from overseas operations since over-extending itself during the late 1980s property boom. Its net asset value has fallen from 475p at the end of 1994 to 450p at the end of last year and its dividend has been flat since the recession.

Recently MEPC rehired a takeover approach by Hammerson. It has also been linked with other potential predators, including British Land.

Stung by Hammerson's hostile approach, MEPC has attempted to move on to the front foot itself, appointing a new corporate development director, Robert Ware, to seek out deals. With £100m of cash, it is thought to be looking for acquisitions of up to £500m.

Burford, with a market capitalisation of just over £500m, has been an impressive investment over the past four years, although problems with Trocadero have put its shares into reverse in recent months.

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Concern as sportswear boss gives son top job

Sameena Ahmad

Stephen Rubin, chairman and chief executive of Pentland, the Speedo and Berghaus sportswear group, laid himself open to charges of nepotism yesterday when he appointed his 32-year-old son as chief executive.

Mr Rubin will split his roles next year but has risked the ire of institutional investors and corporate governance experts with the promotion of his son, Andrew.

The move follows similar controversial appointments at Next, where chairman Lord Wolfson appointed his 29-year-old son Simon as a director of the FTSE 100 company earlier this year. Lord Hanson also made his young son Robert a director of the conglomerate before it was demerged.

Andrew Rubin, a Harvard business school graduate, has been with Pentland as marketing director since 1995. Stephen Rubin, 59, and who owns 56 per cent of Pentland's shares, himself worked for his father at Pentland, joining the company when he was 21.

In another move which raised concerns about the independence of Pentland's non-executive directors, the company has appointed John Quelch to its non-executive board. Mr Quelch was a professor at Harvard and a former non-executive director of Reebok, the footwear business which Pentland bought in 1981 for £50,000 and sold for £400m 10 years later.

Mr Quelch joins Robert Shepherd, now a non-executive director but previously an executive on Pentland's board between 1972 and 1992.

"They are running this company like it is a private business

and ignoring the shareholders," complained one institution, pointing out that Pentland shares have underperformed the market by more than 40 per cent since it floated in 1989.

Manifest, the corporate governance body, was concerned about the news. Adam Kay of Manifest said: "Though this is technically a split between the chairman and chief executive roles, shareholders will note the obvious familial link. If I were a shareholder I would want to see a nomination committee. The independence of Mr Shepherd has to be in question."

Stephen Rubin defended the appointment: "We are a family business, but it is important to say that we did get full approval from our shareholders and our non-executive directors."

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be run by the same rules. That's life. If this were a normal company with family controlling a minority stake, it wouldn't be a source of comfort. On the whole you want someone promoted on merit, not because he is the chairman's son."

Though a spokesman for Mercury Asset Management confirmed that Pentland had sought and received approval for the appointment, another leading institution denied that it had granted tacit approval: "That is misleading. We have had discussions and we have been told about it."

Stephen Rubin defended the appointment: "We are a family business, but it is important to say that we did get full approval from our shareholders and our non-executive directors."

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Shareholders press Ladbroke to bid for Capital Corporation

Sameena Ahmad

Institutional investors in Capital Corporation, the controversial London casino company, have approached Ladbroke, the gaming group, in the last three weeks to pressure the company to bid for Capital. It is understood Ladbroke suggested to the institutions an indicative bid price of £150m in £160m. Capital yesterday reported flat operating profits to £7m after £7m of costs associated with the blocked bid from London Clubs. Its shares rose 5.5p to 163.5p yesterday, valuing the company at £166m.

Capital, which owns the Mayfair Crocadero and Colony club casinos, was keen to play down recent controversy which has culminated in the company issuing a writ against three former

executives. Capital is under a Stock Exchange investigation following news that Garry Nesbitt, former chairman and now a non-executive director, removed a profit warning from the group's draft interim results announcement last September, despite arguments that doing so could create a false market.

Alan Hearn, Capital's recently appointed chief executive, said: "We are in the dock answering these questions?" Mr Sharp said. Mr Sharp said Osgood had approached Mr Thompson individually about a possible bid, but Mr Thompson failed to pass on that information for "about six months". Mr Sharp said the group had no intention of asking Mr Nesbitt to leave or of taking the company private.

Capital also announced the sale of the downmarket Cromwell Mini Casino in Knightsbridge for £23m cash.

Former Clyde directors return with rescue deal for Pittencraeff

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The former top management of Clyde Petroleum, which lost control after the closely fought £495m takeover bid by Gulf Canada earlier this year, returned to the oil business yesterday with a deal to rescue Pittencraeff Resources, the troubled exploration and production company.

The four ex-Clyde executives, including Michael Gourlay and Roy Franklin, former chairman and group managing director, said they planned to use Pittencraeff to create a "new Clyde" aiming to triple the company's value to up to £150m in two years.

"We've had a nice summer improving our golf handicaps and now it's time to get back in

business," Mr Franklin said. If the new management fulfills its target, it will receive up to 1 million shares through a three-year incentive scheme.

It also emerged yesterday that Terry Heneghan, Pittencraeff's former chief executive who resigned in June, walked away with a £450,000 pay-off, despite the company's financial problems.

His three-year rolling contract, with a £150,000 basic annual salary, was in stark contrast to the Greenbury proposals on executive pay, which recommended contracts of no more than two years.

Another two Pittencraeff directors resigned yesterday, Michael Munro, chairman, and Gerald Hobson, a non-executive director. John Brown, the finance director, is to stay on.

Pittencraeff's leading City in-

vestors, Scottish Value Management and Mercury Asset Management, which speak for some 30 per cent of the shares, had backed the changes after the company failed to find a buyer.

With Clyde's former broker, Huw Covett, the new management yesterday raised £1.7m of new cash through the placing of 2.9 million new shares at 60p. The share price ended 6p higher, at 62.5p. Pittencraeff's biggest shareholder, the US arbitrage fund Liverpool Ltd Partnership and Westgate International, sold its 28.6 per cent stake at 60p.

"The funds are enough to cover two years of looking for acquisition opportunities. The institutions understand that for the right deal we'll be coming back to them for more equity," said Mr Franklin.

Higher interest rates cool the economy down

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

New signs that the overheating economy might be coming off the boil encouraged hopes, ahead of next week's meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee, that the Bank of England will not need to raise interest rates much further. Most economists expect the Bank to pause before it increases the cost of loans again.

The latest survey of service sector businesses helped shares in London make further gains yesterday, following Tuesday's record 257-point increase on Wall Street.

Some Asian markets also made sharp recoveries yesterday, with share prices up strongly in Tokyo, Hong Kong and Jakarta. Other bourses in the crisis-hit region remained in the doldrums, however.

The FTSE 100 index ended nearly 25 points higher at 4,976.9, unable to stay above the 5,000 barrier it had breached earlier in the day. Interest rate prospects also took the pound sharply lower. It lost four pence in end at DM2.88, and sterling's index against a range of currencies fell by 0.8p to 106.6.

The Dow Jones index was slightly lower by mid-morning at 7,875.6, with traders nervous about what key figures on jobs and earnings due from Friday will imply for US interest rates. Many predicted a volatile run up to their publication.

"There is quite a bit of flux in the outlook for interest rates. This sort of volatility is not uncommon when the markets have had a good run," said James Barty, an economist at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell.

A growing number of analysts fear Wall Street in particular is overdue for a sharp correction after enormous gains this year.

Yesterday's survey suggested that the four recent UK interest rate increases have started to cool the most overheated sector of the British economy.

Most City analysts leave open the possibility that the Bank of England will take more action later in the year, however. "This week's figures suggest the increases we've had already are starting to have the required impact. That's encouraging, but it doesn't mean the Bank can leave the job on rates half finished," said David Hillier at BZW.

The monthly survey of purchasing managers in services showed that growth in August remained strong, but less strong than the previous month. The index of business activity declined from an uncomfortable 62.1 in July to 58.6. Businesses blamed higher interest rates and the strong pound.

In the Far East yesterday share prices in some markets staged sharp recoveries. The Hang Seng index in Hong Kong gained 979 points to reach 14,713.99, while Tokyo's Nikkei index climbed by 503 points to 18,755.17.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100		Dow Jones		Nikkei					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)			
FTSE 100	4952.20	+82.00	+1.7	5086.80	4056.60	3.34			
FTSE 250	1633.20	+23.00	+1.5	4729.40	4388.20	3.58			
FTSE 350	2383.30	+34.20	+1.5	2438.00	2017.90	3.39			
FTSE SmallCap	2260.00	+8.42	+0.4	2374.20	2178.20	3.19			
FTSE All-Share	2327.82	+31.82	+1.4	2376.39	1889.78	3.37			
New York	778.04	+155.82	+2.0	8259.31	5032.94	1.71			
Tokyo	1823.52	+258.22	+1.4	20681.07	17303.65	0.86			
Hong Kong	1375.33	+309.68	+2.3	15673.27	12058.17	3.32			
Frankfurt	4047.37	+57.41							

business

Paper prices cut Smurfit's profits

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

Jefferson Smurfit: At a glance

Market value: £2.32bn, share price 210.5p (+4.5p)

Trading record	1994	1995	1996	1996	1997
	Full year			Interim	
Turnover (f£m)	1.71	3.03	2.59	1.35	1.28
Pre-tax profits (f£m)	317	420	201	126	61.2
Earnings per share (fP)	29.0	28.0	12.6	8.2	4.0
Dividends per share (fP)	2.02	4.0	4.2	1.5	1.65

Operating profit, by area (f£m)	
■ 6 months to June 1997	■ 8 months to June 1996
100	60
80	40
60	20
40	0
20	-10
100	80
80	60
60	40
40	20
20	0

Share price, pence	
240	220
200	180
180	160
160	140
140	120
120	100
100	80
80	60
60	40
40	20
20	0

Meantime, analysts are expecting 1120pm profits for the full year, putting the shares on a forward price-earnings ratio of 29. That fully discounts the recovery prospects. Avoid for now.

Plenty of riches in Wilson's land bank

Wilson Connolly, the building group, was looking ill-positioned in the housing market 18 months ago. A bias towards the bottom end of the spectrum at a time when first-time buyers were still not in evidence meant the company had to discount heavily to keep up volumes.

But the picture has changed entirely since the housing market started picking up. Although the group shifted only 1,725 houses in the six months to June, 104 fewer than last time, they were sold at much better margins, with the average selling price rising from £61,000 to £64,400. That fed through to 8 per cent increases in profits to £10.4m, with housing margins jumping from 5.9 to 8.3 per cent.

Although full-year completions at around 4,200 are unlikely to be much different from 1996, the improving momentum of the first half is set to continue.

At close to five years' sales, the land bank is one of the longest in the industry, allowing Wilson to steadily increase the number of its operative sites and be flexible if land costs spiral out of control. Currently, there is little sign of that, with selling prices moving up in line with costs.

Management have done a good job at shifting Wilson out of its ghetto in the one- and two-bedroom house market, halving that proportion of the business to under 30 per cent of sales in less than five years. At the same time, the group has broadened its geographic coverage and gradually diversified its development activities.

The jewels lie within the strategic land portfolio. Wilson hit the jackpot with its 900 acres near Dunfermline in Fife, selling the site for the new £2.6bn Hyundai microchip plant and winning permission for 3,200 houses which will have a plot cost of just 8 per cent of average sales prices. Dunfermline chipped in a land sale profit of around £500,000 in the first

full year.

The economic recovery has played its part in the latest good figures, despite the interest rate hike. Johnson disclosed advertising revenues up 7.7 per cent, beating most forecasts, with recruitment advertising soaring by 24.3 per cent in a buoyant jobs market.

The other good news came from newspaper costs, which the company predicted would stay at similar levels next year. Previously, they had forecast increases of up to 8 per cent. Lower newspaper costs saved the company £2m alone in the first half of 1997.

The improving outlook should raise full-year profit to £37m, compared with £24.4m last year and previous forecasts of £34m. Yesterday's one-third increase in the interim dividend, to 1p, should also be a good guide to the full year. The shares are still attractive as a long-term bet, though as a short-term opportunity they are starting to look fully valued.

half and there could be three times as much again in the second if a site sale to Tesco, likely to be worth around £9m, goes through. Over 20 years, the project could produce £300m of gross sales at very attractive margins, and Wilson has another potential gem at its Broadway site near Exeter.

Full-year profits of £34.5m would put the shares, down 0.5p at 173.5p, on a forward multiple of 15. Attractive.

Emap titles boost Johnston Press

Investors in Johnston Press, the acquisitive Edinburgh-based regional paper group, have every excuse for looking smug, given the company's share price performance. The shares have risen 27 per cent in three months, as market worries over the ability of advertising revenue to weather this year's interest rate rises evaporated.

Yesterday the shares rose a further 6p to a new 12-month high of 222.5p, as the company revealed pre-tax profits in the first half to June of £19.4m, up from £12.6m before. The increase partly reflected the full impact of the £20m takeover of Emap's regional newspaper titles early last year, which doubled Johnston's size. But as always with Johnston Press, sound management and rigorous cost control have justifiably given it a premium rating.

The Emap deal provided Johnston with the opportunity to sell off non-core assets and the company yesterday hinted at the imminent sale of bookbinding and library book selling businesses. Together they could raise £10m, although this would be unlikely to result in a profit over their book value.

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Crash wipes £80m off Molins' value

Magnus Grimond

Molins the cigarette to teabag making equipment group, saw its shares crash 227.5p to 360p yesterday after it issued its fourth profit warning of the year. The company, which has already been hit by accounting irregularities stretching back 10 years at a US business, was forced to admit yesterday that it had been over-optimistic about the second half of the current year, which was now on course for "substantially lower" operating profits.

Peter Harrison, chief executive, said Molins had been looking for results broadly comparable with the second half of 1996. However, shipments of tobacco machinery to the Far East had been affected by delays in receiving letters of credit, resulting in sales in the first half coming in £5m lower than expected.

The latest dismal news from Molins came as the group revealed a slump into a £7.7m loss in the six months to June, against profits of £13.6m before. The figures included a £13.4m exceptional loss at Langston, the US business hit by the ac-

ticular the Chinese State Tobacco Monopoly Authority bid about £1bn in £12m of orders which had been delayed.

"Had they come in before August, we would have been able to manufacture and produce them before the year end in December," he said. That is now looking unlikely. "We have a risk which covers recovery of overheads in the factory and relates to despatches in terms of orders at the year end."

Peter Harrison refused to quantify the likely effect on profits, which brokers had previously forecast at around £13m for this year, but estimates are now likely to tumble again. Yesterday's share price fall wiped £80m off Molins' market value, leaving it at a mere £12m less than half its value as recently as April last year, when the shares peaked at £10.35.

Excluding exceptional items, pre-tax profits more than halved from £15.6m to £7.5m, on sales cut from £1.47m to £1.25m. The group blamed the strength of the pound for eroding its competitive position at a time when demand in some of its markets had slowed down. The interim dividend is held at 6.5p.

Amey amasses £100m war chest for acquisition spree

Andrew Yates

Amey, the construction group whose shares have soared on the back of lucrative construction business it acquired as part of the privatisation of British Rail, yesterday said it was likely to go on an acquisition spree with a war chest of up to £100m. It is eyeing up targets in the facilities management industry and is likely to complete at least another £70m to spend on acquisitions.

Amey also said that the private finance initiative (PFI), the controversial scheme under which the Government contracts out construction work to the private sector, was finally beginning to take off after being dogged by severe delays.

Nigel Ashley, Amey's chairman, said the group was confident it would soon be awarded a large PFI contract to build a hospital in Birmingham. The deal could herald a flood of new hospital contract awards. The Government is redrafting the rules on PFI hospital contracts, designed to reduce the risks faced by the private sector in the event of a hospital trust failing into financial difficulties.

The new rules should be implemented shortly, leading to the award of more than 25 projects to the construction industry.

"The PFI is here to stay and there are many more projects in the pipeline," Mr Ashley said.

Amey has recently won a deal to build the Croydon Tramlink and a contract to build an extension to the M6 near Carlisle.

It is also bidding for £400m of track renewal and signalling work from Railtrack, which has embarked on a £10bn pro-

gramme to upgrade Britain's ageing rail system.

The acquisition spree could transform Amey, which has seen its share price almost quadruple to 457.5p since the start of last year after it acquired a construction business from British Rail. Amey already has up to £25.7m in the bank. The group said it would be comfortable with gearing at around 50 per cent, which would mean it would have at least another £70m to spend on acquisitions.

"Facilities management work now accounts for three quarters of our business and we are in talks about a number of opportunities," Mr Ashley said.

Amey announced a 70 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £6.1m (£3.57m) on turnover up 29 per cent to £192m for the six months to June.

Jacques Vert warns loss will rise to £9m

Andrew Yates

Jacques Vert, the troubled women's clothing retailer, said yesterday it expected to make a loss of more than £9m for the year to May.

The loss is much higher than the market had expected and the group admitted it would be forced to record a big stock write-down after discovering problems during its annual stock count.

It is another blow to the clothes retailer which has been beset by problems over the past few years. Jacques Vert warned in May that disappointing wholesale orders and the decision by House of Fraser, the department store group, to terminate concessions at all 32 of its outlets would plunge the group into the red. House of Fraser dumped the group to concentrate on younger lines after disappointing sales in its Vert ranges in its stores.

The latest profit warning coincided with the resignation of the finance director, Philip Ashworth.

Jacques Vert's problems stem from a move into the casual market. The group announced plans earlier this year to attempt to halt its alarming slide. These

included splitting its retail and wholesale business and selling its Tyne & Wear factory.

It is also developing a joint venture with Littlewoods, which recently bought a sizeable stake in the group, to publish an upmarket ladieswear catalogue.

However, Jacques Vert admitted it would be forced to record a big stock write-down after discovering problems during its annual stock count.

The group has now made five profit warnings in the past two years. Industry sources believe there is no quick fix to Jacques Vert's problems and it is likely to make another large loss in the current year.

There had been mounting speculation that Jacques Vert was in danger of breaching its banking limits. However, the group said it was still operating within its borrowing limits and moved to calm shareholder fears yesterday by saying it was in touch with its bank, Midland, to make sure it had enough money to complete its restructuring plan.

The company said like-for-like sales since May were ahead of expectations and the shares edged up 0.5p to 25p.

Profits finally pick up at Hickson

Andrew Yates

Hickson, the beleaguered chemicals group that has been hit by a series of disasters over the past few years, said yesterday its radical restructuring programme was finally beginning to bear fruit.

Chairman Sir James Hahn said trading in the current year was continuing in line with expectations, and he predicted a stronger performance in the second half of the year. Hickson's shares plunged from 241p in 1993 to 53p earlier this year but rose 4p to 77.5p yesterday.

The group announced underlying pre-tax profits of £3.8m for the six months to June compared with £1m in the same

IN BRIEF

GUS sells Canadian finance arm

Great Universal Stores has sold its Canadian finance company, Superior Acceptance Corporation of North America, to Ford Motor subsidiary Associates Corporation for Can\$170m (£80m). GUS said the sale would result in a one-off net profit of around £9m in its group accounts for 1997/1998. Superior made an operating profit of £8.4m in the year to March 1997.

Brighter prospects for German industry

Prospects for German industry are looking brighter according to figures yesterday showing a 3.5 per cent rise in output in July, to a level 5.9 per cent higher than a year earlier. All categories of manufacturing output picked up during the month, but the advance was far stronger in the heavy industry categories and construction than in consumer goods. Economists said this confirmed that exports rather than home demand were driving the recovery.

M&S to open store in Frankfurt

Marks & Spencer will open a store in Frankfurt, western Germany, in autumn 1999. The shop will be on Frankfurt's main shopping street, the Zeil, at a site occupied currently by retailer Ott and Heinemann.

Key investors reject Casino offer

Jean-Charles Naouri and Antoine Guichard, key shareholders of the French supermarket group Casino, said yesterday that they would reject a takeover offer from rival Promodes no matter what price they were offered. Casino also announced first half profits up 39 per cent, which analysts suggested might force Promodes to increase its Fr28bn hostile offer, unveiled on Monday. "I completely and totally reject the tender offer whatever the price," Mr Guichard said yesterday.

Wedgwood profits up as US sales climb

Waterford Wedgwood's pre-tax profit rose 11.5 per cent in the first half of the year, in line with expectations, as sales in the US climbed. The Irish maker of crystal and china said profit for the six months to 30 June increased to £8.7m, or 16.1p per share, from £7.8m, or 14.08p per share, a year earlier.

Danka to cut jobs in global revamp

Danka Business Systems, the distributor of office equipment, is cutting 5 per cent of its 20,000-strong workforce as part of a global restructuring. London-based Danka is integrating its office products, office imaging and outsourcing units faster than expected. Most of the cuts are expected to be made in the US.

Company

Bookmakers will shut due to public pressure

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Britain's leading bookmakers decided yesterday that their period of Saturday mourning will, after all, last all day.

Corals, Ladbrokes and William Hill – the last-named typified the Big Three's response when they initially argued that they owed it to customers to bet on Irish racing and British dogs just after Diana, Princess of Wales is buried – have bowed to their

god of market forces and will now shut up shop. The canine meetings at Crawford and Romford have been abandoned.

"We have carefully considered customer and staff feedback throughout the week on whether or not to close our shops this Saturday," Christopher Bell, the Ladbrokes managing director, said yesterday.

"Our decision has been strongly influenced by the feelings of both customers and staff at this time of national mourning." There was no mention though of the strong influence

that had prompted the decision to open the shops in the first place.

William Hill will pay their staff despite a rare Saturday off, but there will be no chance for their workers to spend the money on a trade newspaper. Both *The Sporting Life* and *Racing Post* will not be published on the day of the funeral.

Looking further ahead, there is continuity for the future of the Grand National, following yesterday's announcement that Martell, the Cognac house, is to extend its sponsorship of the race.

Aintree, which is not one of

Aintree event until 2004. The French company, whose contract runs out next year, has signed a new, six-year deal, which will lead to a minimum

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Nanouksha
(Salisbury 3.20)
NB: Yanabi
(Salisbury 2.20)

£4.5m being donated, the largest gross agreement in the history of British racing.

Aintree, which is not one of

Dr Johnson injured

Dr Johnson, a leading hope for the St Leger a week on Saturday, will miss the race after injuring himself, the colt's trainer Charlie O'Brien said yesterday.

The chestnut, successful in four of his six starts this term, was an 11-2 chance in William Hill's betting on the strength of

his win at Leopardstown last month. His absence has prompted William Hill to shorten the prices of their market leaders for the race, Silver Patriarch and Stowaway, to 5-2 from 11-4, with Andre Fabre's Vertical Speed, who began the day at 11-2, now a 7-2 chance.

HYPERTON

2.10 Penrose
4.10 Noble Demand
4.40 Present Chance
3.10 WINTER ROMANCE (nap) **5.10 Shardadrik**
3.40 Darapour

DARVINE, 5-2

STAFFAS, 5-4 (for side); 7-1 stands-side; rest inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE, 5-2

Left-hand, U-shaped course. Flat and ideal for the powerful galloper.

Course is 1 m of city on A1030. York station 1 m. County Stand 5.1B (16-25 years-old 5.1B); Tattersalls 5.1C; Silver Ring 5.6; Apsley 5.6; Course Endurance 5.8 (OAPS 5.80). Under-16 free all customers. **CAR PARK**: S2, remainder free.

24.5% of stakes 21 from 1st (17.16%); 18 from 2nd (18.6%); J. Dunlop 20.9% (18.5%).

LEADING JOCKEYS: L. Dutton 48 wins (from 126) gives a success ratio of 21%; P. Eddie 37 from 225 (16.7%); R. Hill 25 from 172 (11.5%); W. E. Bawden 19 from 134 (14.0%).

FAVOURITES: 207 wins in 575 races (35%).

WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN RACES: Deeply Vale (2.40) & Jones (2.80) have been sent 261 miles by G. Moore from Woodlesford, E. Sussex.

YORK

HYPERION

2.10 Penrose
4.10 Noble Demand
4.40 Present Chance

3.10 WINTER ROMANCE (nap) **5.10 Shardadrik**

3.40 Darapour

DARVINE, 5-2

STAFFAS, 5-4 (for side); 7-1 stands-side; rest inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE, 5-2

Left-hand, U-shaped course. Flat and ideal for the powerful galloper.

Course is 1 m of city on A1030. York station 1 m. County Stand 5.1B (16-25 years-old 5.1B); Tattersalls 5.1C; Silver Ring 5.6; Apsley 5.6; Course Endurance 5.8 (OAPS 5.80). Under-16 free all customers. **CAR PARK**: S2, remainder free.

24.5% of stakes 21 from 1st (17.16%); 18 from 2nd (18.6%); J. Dunlop 20.9% (18.5%).

LEADING JOCKEYS: L. Dutton 48 wins (from 126) gives a success ratio of 21%; P. Eddie 37 from 225 (16.7%); R. Hill 25 from 172 (11.5%); W. E. Bawden 19 from 134 (14.0%).

FAVOURITES: 207 wins in 575 races (35%).

WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN RACES: Deeply Vale (2.40) & Jones (2.80) have been sent 261 miles by G. Moore from Woodlesford, E. Sussex.

YORKSHIRE-TYNE TEES TELEVISION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 210D of Penalty Value £2.22

1. 050 ALLIANCE (20) 11-1 L'Amore 9.0
2. 051 BIRDS OF PREY (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
3. 052 BRIGHTON (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
4. 053 CIRCUIT (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
5. 054 MUMMIE (37) A. McAllister 9.0
6. 055 PERSIANO (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
7. 056 TOWNE (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
8. 057 WOLFHOUND (48) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
9. 058 PENROSE (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
10. 059 PROKETTE (20) 11-1 K Derby 9.0
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sport

The tragedy of Dunblane brought about finally the realisation that sport does not matter much in the wider scheme of things

If, as it appears, the death of Diana, Princess of Wales has caused people to reflect on the comparative unimportance of sport, a good question is why did this not occur to them at the time of Dunblane and other horrors.

In the enormous reverberation of last weekend's tragic event, it should not be forgotten that other awful opportunities to put sport into proper perspective have either been ignored or soon forgotten.

As I recall it now, there was no suggestion that British sporting activities should be temporarily suspended following the Dunblane murders or when a mountain of coal waste came down to take the lives of more than a hundred

children in the Welsh village of Aberfan.

Both events made me weep but the more recent tragedy of Dunblane — and I guess the passing of time has something to do with this — brought about finally the realisation that sport does not matter very much in the wider scheme of things. The terrible news from Dunblane reached me in Las Vegas shortly before a contest for the world heavyweight championship. Given half a chance, I would have abandoned an assignment that no longer had my full attention.

Something similar came to mind when it was decided to continue with the 1986 World Cup finals in Mexico only eight months after an

earthquake devastated large sections of Mexico City, claiming more than 30,000 victims. Back from assessing the damage to installations, a BBC producer, now retired, told of bodies being torn from the wreckage so that work could begin on the restoration of a television complex. "It made me sick," he said. "To stage the World Cup there is utterly immoral."

There have been many occasions over the years, increasingly so these days, when I have grown irritated and fed up with sport, even though it is a hit presumptuous to be irritated with issues that do not seem to bother many people.

The best advice I was given as a starter in this trade was to take the



KEN JONES

job seriously — but not myself. I have tried to abide by this, if not always to the satisfaction of previous employers.

Sometimes, this led to quite nasty verbal encounters. Once, in an ag-

gressive tone, and immediately after the match, I was asked to explain how England's football team had managed to lose in Switzerland. The question, in essence stereotypical, was: "How did they manage to lose against a bunch of waiters and clockmakers?"

"You tell me," I replied.

"No, you tell me," came the answer. "You are supposed to be the expert."

A Canadian with whom I was once associated used to say that "ex" is something in the past and "sport" is a spray that never made it, but that is another story.

What I'm going on about here is something that Hugh McIlvanney summed up perfectly when he

described sport as "magnificent irrelevance". Unfortunately, that truth is all too often ignored in the language of commentary and reporting. Apart from calamities that result in death or serious disability, nothing in sport should be referred to as tragic.

Gareth Southgate's appearance in a television commercial based on his crucial penalty miss in the semi-finals of Euro '96 was objected to by a sports columnist on the grounds that he was capitalising on a national tragedy. This was quite ridiculous.

Success in sport can lift countries and communities but care should be taken to ensure that it is not invested with too much importance. This is made no easier by the studious

manner in which some self-annointed people continue to regard sport as evidence of retarded development.

I have never come across a defeat in sport that has justified more than fleeting anguish. In the context of life itself it ought not to matter over much to a spectator, whatever the depth of his or her affiliations.

It did not take the death of Diana, Princess of Wales to remind me that there is a limit to sport's relevance. If I did not know it before, I knew it when more than 40 protesting students were murdered in Mexico City shortly before soaring doves of peace were released there to announce the 1968 Olympic Games.

Glamorgan dig in for points

Cricket

DEREK PRINGLE
reports from The Oval
Surrey 204
Glamorgan 363-7

If there is one thing Welsh cricket lovers would prefer to a National Assembly, it is to see the Championship pennant flying from the ramparts of Cardiff castle. It is a generation since Glamorgan last won cricket's premier domestic competition in 1969, a gap that the current side are putting every effort into bridging. On a day when rain interrupted play five times, that meant taking maximum batting points as well as total control of this game.

Croft, whose muted contribution to England's cause this summer has attracted criticism, also gained some credit. When balls are not bowled at a discouraging pace, Croft is a handy performer with the bat. Coming to the crease in the 60th over, he quickly restored the lost impetus with a collection of thumping drives off the seamers, as well as some heavy smears over mid-wicket. In all, he struck eight boundaries in his 53, before Hollioake Jrn trapped him lbw.

If Surrey did miss a trick, it was in not exploiting Croft's apprehension against the short ball. On a slate grey day, it was Croft's knock that made all the difference and, although Surrey's attack does not boast anyone as fast and accurate as Glenn McGrath, Hollioake Snr might have persisted with his leg guile for longer than he did.

However, in a tight Championship race like this one, dodging the showers is almost as important as picking up bonus points. When the weather strikes over the next few days will be just as crucial as how teams bat and bowl.

After the early loss of their playmaker, Matthew Maynard, for '76, it was the only realistic way to go, and both Adrian Dule and Robert Croft made notable contributions. Glamorgan ended the day with a lead of 159.

Maynard, who had knocked the Surrey bowling around the previous day, began much as he had left off, his powerful strokes bearing an ominous tattoo on the boundary boards.

However, having struck Martin Bicknell for a scorching four past cover, his aggression got the better of him, and he mistimed an ambitious lofted drive back to the bowler.

With the captain gone, Dale and the diminutive Tony Cottee dug in between stops.

White makes century

Round-up

Given the weather forecast, Yorkshire expected the dressing-room card school to be in all-day session at Headingley, so the 45 minutes' play possible between a 2.15 start and the arrival of more heavy rain came as something of a bonus, writes Ian Cutler.

It was time enough for Craig White to turn his fluent, unbeaten 74 into a first century of the season, reaching the milestone by steering a wide delivery from Alamgir Sheriyar to the wicket.

third man for his 14th boundary. He had already hooked his second-six off the wayward Worcestershire seamer, whose five overs yesterday cost 36 runs.

White's hundred, his fourth on this ground among seven for Yorkshire, came off 120 balls as Yorkshire, who picked up four bonus points to Worcester's two, to keep their Championship challenge on course, advanced to 414 for 6.

■ Derbyshire hope to complete the signing Saeed Anwar, the Pakistani Test opener, as their overseas professional for next season by the weekend.

SCOREBOARD

Britannic Assurance County Championship	
Second day of four: 10.30 today unless stated	
Kent v Gloucestershire	
CHAMPS: Kent (7 pts), with all second-tier wins standing, are 70 runs ahead of Gloucestershire (6).	
Kent — First Innings 305 (A P Wells 77). GLOUCESTERSHIRE — First Innings 12 for 0.	
1 D T Ball c A P Wells b Walker 1 M G N Windle c Wells b Phillips 6 T H C Hancock c March b Phillips 8 R J Dawson c Headley b Strong 100 S V S P Prichard 2 M W Headley 1 I C Russell lbw b Ealham 34 N M C Ball c Walker b Strong 5 R P Davis c Fulton b Strand 5 J M Smith run out 0 D L Morris not out 0 Extras (b) 20 256 Fall: 1-20; 2-20; 3-58; 4-60; 5-81; 6-177 1-26; 2-24; 3-25; 4-25; 5-25; 6-25.	
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Gloucestershire — Second Innings	

Ripley revels in surprise recall

Stuart Ripley had spent his whole career dreaming of an England call-up – but when it came the experience was an anti-climax.

Ripley's England debut came in Graham Taylor's last match, against San Marino in November 1993. Yesterday, after his first day's training with the international squad since that night, he recalled: "You can't pick and choose when you get called up by England – it is a great honour – but, had I been able to, I would not have chosen that game."

"Someone said 'it must have felt like being the last man on the Titanic' and that summed it up. Graham Taylor was taking a lot of stick and all the players were being tarnished with the same brush. They were terrified of playing."

"I couldn't believe the negative vibes. It was a difficult environment to come into, they were absolutely rock-bottom. Confidence is everything in a footballer, it affects any player. The most talented player in the world won't show that ability if he lacks confidence, I've seen it happen to players with immense talent."

"The difference between then and now is tremendous. The atmosphere is bubbling. I could see it on television. Players are trying things which they only do if they have confidence, things that are not obvious."

"I am now fitter than I've ever been and playing as well as I have ever done. I feel I can go past anyone when it comes to the World Cup next summer."

Glenn Moore
on the return of a 'forgotten' winger to the England fold

You need to do that at international level."

Ripley speaks from personal experience. After Taylor left, Terry Venables never showed an interest and, he admits, he was not playing well enough to deserve a second cap. Poor form was followed by injury, which put him out of most of last season. When he returned, Blackhurn Rovers had dispensed with wingers and he could not get back in the side. This year, however, their new manager, Roy Hodgson, has played Ripley and Jason Wilcox on the flanks and Rovers have responded with 15 goals in five games to lead the table.

"It is not the same as the championship side," he added. "The full-backs are playing further forward so Jason and I are pushed on and get more one-on-ones, which is our forte. In the championship year we were expected to do a lot more chasing back and defending and, while I was happy to do it, as it helped the team, as a winger you want to attack."

"I am now fitter than I've ever been and playing as well as I have ever done. I feel I can go past anyone when it comes to the World Cup next summer."

Glenn Hoddle agreed and said: "He is back to his best and in a very positive frame of mind. He has looked as good as anyone has joining in with us for the first time. He might suit our situation next week."

However, despite this testimony, Ripley admitted: "I was still a bit surprised to be called up after being out of the game so long. For the last 18 months I've either been injured, playing with injuries or been coming back from them."

"I never despaired. Players get injured, it is part of the job. It is difficult but you have to cope with it. I worked very hard in the gym and with the physio. You also have to cope with not getting the weekly highs and lows. You see the lads getting hyped up for matches and you can't. When you are injured you don't get that adrenalin rush on a matchday. I think that is one of the hardest things people have to cope with when they retire."

As his comments suggest, Ripley is a thoughtful player and, although Hoddle generally has little time for "specialist wingers", as Ripley regards himself, he is considering a different approach to break down Moldova. Ripley may thus have the chance to show that, should England qualify, he has more than just a French A level to offer when it comes to the World Cup next summer.



Stuart Ripley enjoying the upbeat atmosphere as he trained at Bisham Abbey yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

McCarthy laments injury toll

Niall Quinn, Ray Houghton, David Kelly, Curtis Fleming and Keith O'Neill all withdrawn with injuries from the Republic of Ireland squad for the vital Group Eight qualifiers in Iceland on Saturday and Lithuania next Wednesday.

The news did not get any better yesterday for the Irish manager, Mick McCarthy, after an x-ray on the Norwich striker O'Neill revealed a cracked bone in his foot.

McCarthy said: "Keith has got to be one of the unluckiest players around with injuries. If you see him signing autographs and hear a crack then, with his luck, it is more likely to be his finger than the pencil."

Quinn, who made his international comeback after a year out when Ireland were held to a home goalless draw by Lithuania two weeks ago, has had more trouble with the knee injury that has dogged his career.

The Reading player-coach Houghton, a veteran of some of the Republic's finest successes, had to miss his club's game

against Queen's Park Rangers on Tuesday night and confirmed his withdrawal yesterday.

Fleming joined the Irish training camp in Dublin yesterday to return to Middlesbrough, after failing a fitness test on a groin injury, and Kelly, who withdrew on Tuesday, has had a cartilage operation. McCarthy would have turned to the Boro forward Alan Moore as a replacement, but he too is injured.

The Irish squad, due to trav-

Peacock held back

Darren Peacock, Newcastle's player of the year, has had his return to the first-team squad put on hold.

The centre-half has fully recovered from two summer groin operations which kept him out of the club's pre-season preparations as well as their early season matches. But he had to put off a possible return on Wednesday night for the reserves at Doncaster because of a troublesome knee.

He said: "If any of the play-

ers we leave behind when we go to Reykjavik early this morning is now reduced to 19 players, even if O'Neill, who has missed four of the last five World Cup qualifiers with an injury, makes the trip.

McCarthy's side need maximum points from both games to keep alive their chances of finishing runners-up in the group and qualifying for a two-leg play-off against one of the other group's second-placed teams.

He added: "The real work starts here. We have to get the football club back on an even keel, and get it on a firm financial footing to face the economic hardships of playing away from Brighton for the foreseeable future."

Another worry for McCarthy, though, is that nine of his remaining players – including the captain Andy Townsend and midfielders Roy Keane and Alan Shearer – are on yellow cards. They will be automatically banned from Wednesday's match in Vilnius if booked again against Iceland.

McCarthy has already promoted the West Bromwich Albion winger Kevin Kilbane from the Under-21 squad to the senior party and may have to call on further recruits from the younger players if there are more injuries or suspensions.

ers leave behind when we go to Iceland suddenly make a dramatic improvement in their fitness, it is possible I could ask them to fly out and join us in Lithuania after the weekend."

"The squad now looks very skinny and although we are well loaded with defenders, I won't have too many options in other positions. But we'll just have to go out there with the players we've got, and I still believe we have enough ability to win both matches."

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Dick Knight, the new Brighton chairman, has made clear the board's determination to bring the Seagulls back close to their former Goldstone Ground, after finally taking control of the club.

News that the ownership

deal has gone through has come as a huge relief for supporters of the club, and Knight admits that the new board have "their hands full" following the two most traumatic years in Brighton's history.

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Bellotti from Brighton and promised new cash for players, has a 49.5 per cent shareholding in the Third Division club.

Bellotti, the former Liberal Democrat MP for Eastbourne, has been with Brighton for nearly four years and was subjected to a hate campaign during Albion's last seasons at the Goldstone Ground when they nearly went out of business.

However, Knight is now looking to the future, and as well as long-term plans he is intent on stepping up the search for a new temporary ground rather than continuing to use Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium, which involves a 150-mile trip to watch "home" games.

Knight added: "The issue here is, does the community of Sussex want a superb modern sports stadium to house not only its Football League club but also a whole range of other sports

facilities, which is our vision for this stadium for the future?"

The scheme has been attacked by environmentalists, who say it will ruin an area of outstanding natural beauty, and Knight stressed: "Our main priority was to gain control of the club. The issue of Waterfall will certainly be addressed, and we will explore all the options open to us in the Brighton area for a suitable sports stadium."

"I am going to try and get away from Gillingham as soon as possible. We are going to have our hands full, but I am sure everyone is as relieved as I am that the long ownership saga is now over. We are delighted we're now in a position from which we can consider it. But Thursday is definitely out."

Liz Costa, vice-chairman of Brighton's official supporters club, summed up Seagulls fans' feelings, saying: "Thank goodness this matter has been resolved. Fans have wondered at times over the last two-and-a-half years whether it has been worth it. But they kept the faith and have been rewarded."

The first priority of the new board is to put in place a more suitable ground share than Gillingham. Then we clearly ultimately want to make sure that we bring a club back to the Brighton and Hove area."

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